

Sight and Sound



Walter Hill's
'Geronimo': the
screenwriter's story
**Censored: India and
'Bandit Queen'**
'Forrest Gump' and
the comfort blanket
**Gavin Lambert's
farewell to
Lindsay Anderson**
Chinese cinema:
new revelations
**Soundtracks:
Ennio Morricone**
Video: Maggie
Greenwald
on 'The Ballad
of Little Jo'

Action man

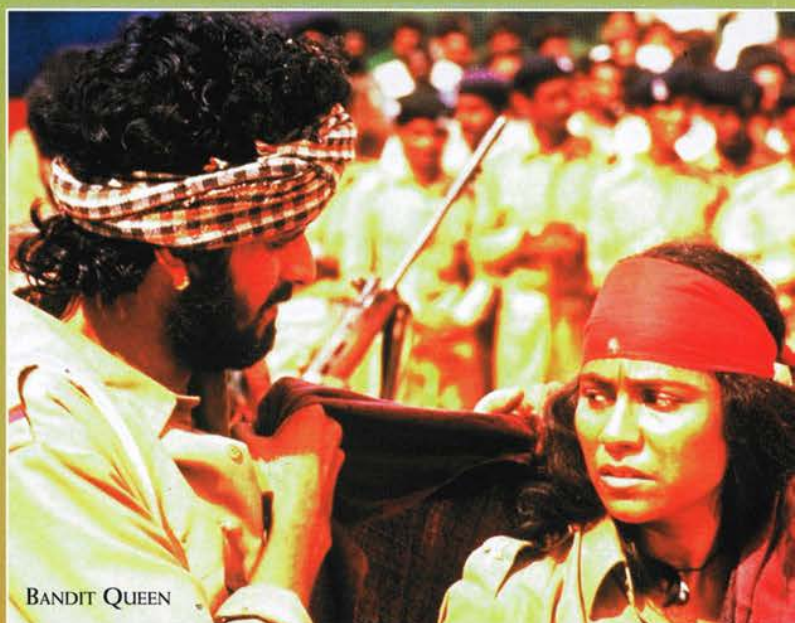
Harold Lloyd's 'Speedy' to Keanu Reeves in 'Speed'

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Sight and Sound

October 1994



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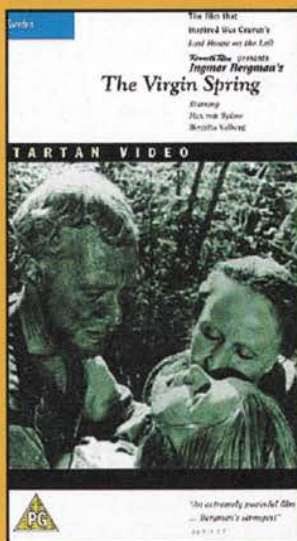
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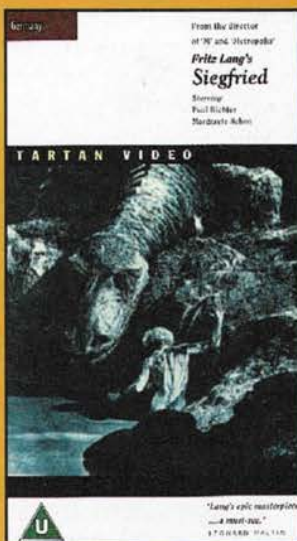
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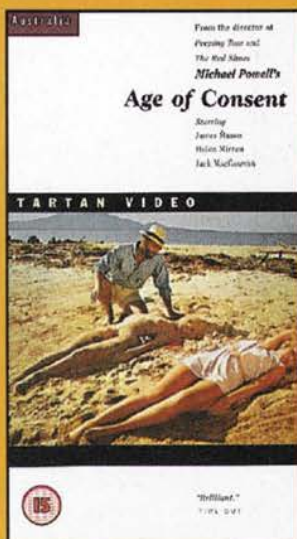
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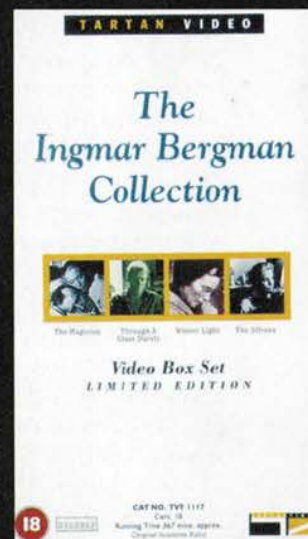


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Vertical hold

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So used are we to the hand-wringing of our film producers about lack of investment and government support for a British industry that there has been a tendency to regard it as special pleading. Their ritual 'moaning' is at intervals overwhelmed by the kind of false optimism that brandishes the success of a *Four Weddings and a Funeral* and argues that if only enough British films were pitched at the right popular audience (for which read American audience), we would have a vigorous and successful industry.

This 'we just don't make 'em good enough' attitude fails to acknowledge that independent film producers in the UK are thoroughly disadvantaged by the structure of film distribution in their home market. Not only is their access to the multiplex screens that are largely owned by the American majors severely restricted, but their ability to recoup production finance is also seriously handicapped in comparison with their American competitors.

As elsewhere in Europe, the vertically and horizontally integrated marketing and exhibition arms of the American majors grab the lion's share of profits from booming cinema attendances. Since this upswing in British cinemagoing is partly the result of the majors' investment in cinema-building, they can argue with force that they deserve to reap the rewards of their own enterprise. Yet the huge expense of the kind of attractions that have also revitalised admissions, from *Terminator 2* to *Jurassic Park*, has effectively priced most non-Hollywood producers out of much of the mainstream marketplace. The American majors use the profits from such mega-hits to offset their losses on unsuccessful films. UK producers have no such recourse, and every British film needs to be a hit to guarantee the next.

The question of whether the UK film distribution market is fair and competitive is now under investigation by the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, whose report is due in the near future. And certainly there does seem a case to answer. The way the US majors operate in Europe means that they barely compete with one another. MGM, Paramount and Universal pool their marketing resources in UIP, Warners and MGM have their own cinema chains, and the UCI chain handles Paramount and Universal films. Columbia, Fox and Buena Vista have similarly advantageous situations.

In contrast, an independent British film producer who aims for popular success must first convince an American-owned distributor that their film will make a large amount of money, and then relinquish control of its marketing to them. (It is worth remembering that *Four Weddings and a Funeral* had to be sold in the UK as "America's No 1 Comedy".) Given that few British films gain a wide distribution, and that distributors and exhibitors take their share of any profits first, it is hardly surprising that investors for British film are almost impossible to find. The only alternative for many British features is a limited release in London and then distribution through the beleaguered system of independent Regional Film Theatres.

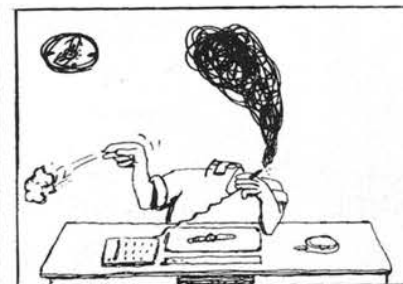
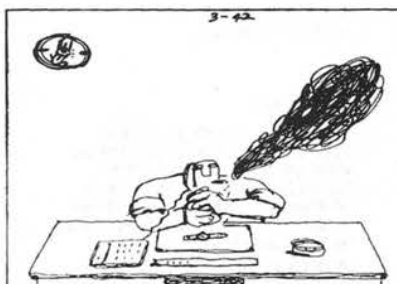
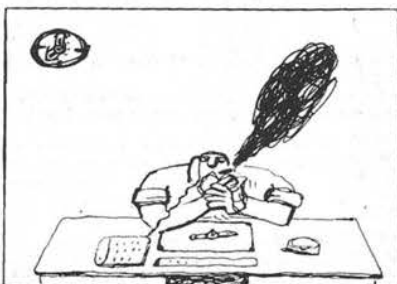
Other European countries have state support schemes to maintain their production presence and it's arguable that the fact that they do not share a common language with the US means it is easier for them to maintain an appetite for indigenous product. The claim that British producers are uniquely disadvantaged does seem unanswerable.

Whether the MMC will agree is a matter of guesswork, but if they do (and they should) then a dangerous game begins. The range of options for potential government action is attractive but fraught with difficulties. However desirable it is to require the majors to plough a significant portion of their UK profits back into UK production, such a move is likely to be met at first with a powerful counter-lobby and ultimately with the full armoury of creative accountancy. Similarly, to require the majors to guarantee the distribution of a quota of British films might result in the films languishing in inappropriate venues. (It is interesting that a major such as UIP should have chosen this moment to distribute widely Ken Loach's *Ladybird*.)

At a time when Pinewood and Shepperton are booked ahead with incoming US productions, it would be stupid to provoke the studios to the point where they might consider moving their productions elsewhere as a retaliatory measure. Yet if the government can be persuaded that a 'critical mass' of British film production is an essential cultural as well as commercial ambition, it might well be necessary initially to put some large noses out of joint - in order to produce an acceptable trade-off. Does this government have that kind of nerve?

JERRY ON LINE #1

James Sillavan - Peter Lydon ©



'Jerry, in spite of our 3 year blockbuster drought, the inability to attract A-list talent, the bungled marketing of our big Summer release! & the fact I was overheard in the men's room bad-mouthing you, doesn't mean I'm looking for a scapegoat - I prefer the word volunteer...'

The business

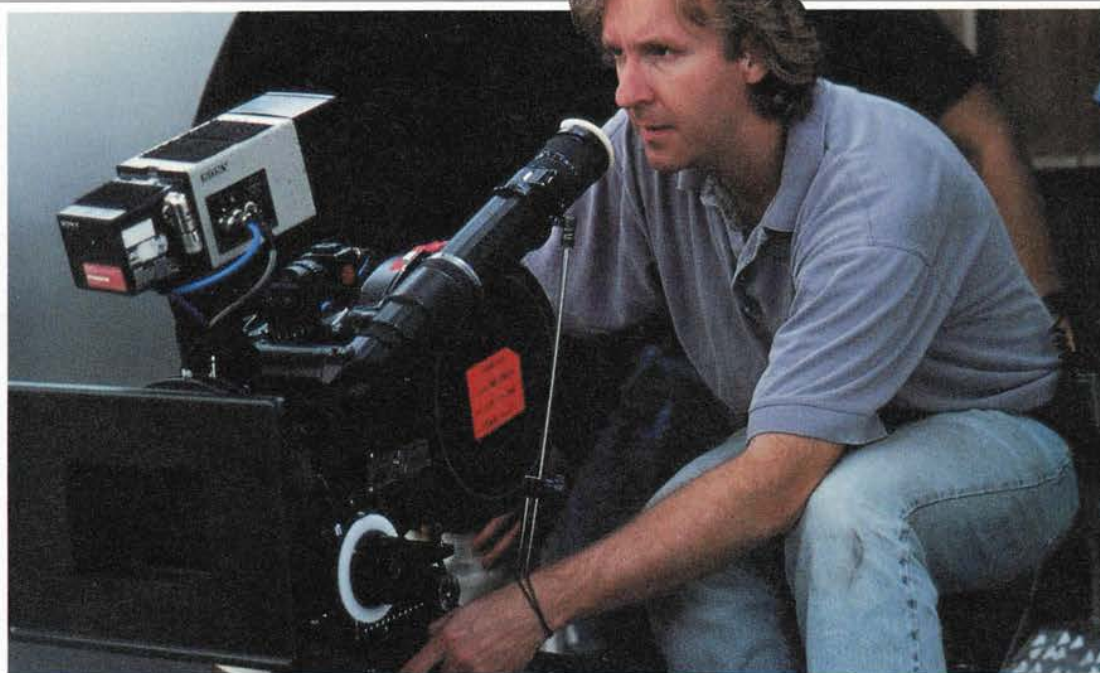
● As the recent heavy Hollywood presence at President Clinton's 'California Day' in the White House indicated, the movies are still (along with the aerospace industry) one of the twin pillars of the Los Angeles economy. So the tendency of more and more production companies to film elsewhere in North America – North Carolina, Florida and Vancouver are the three most frequent destinations for what is called runaway production – is a major source of concern for the City of Los Angeles and the State of California.

A complete revamp of the city's film permit laws was carried out with the last change of mayor, and things are now cheaper, quicker and more filmmaker-friendly. Except, that is, in the studios' and independent production companies' always volatile relationship with the unions. Attempts to run non-union shoots in the Los Angeles area have met with picketing and even violence (major telemovie producer Kushner-Locke was a flashpoint earlier this year).

All the more interesting, then, is the recent public slanging match carried out via full-page advertisements in *Daily Variety* between Al Di Tolla, president of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE), the main production workers' union, and James Cameron, producer-director of such movies as *Terminator 2: Judgment Day* and *True Lies*. Depending on your political perspective on organised labour, the dispute is yet another instance of the unions behaving like dinosaurs, or more proof that union-busting remains part of every producer's hidden agenda.

Referring to an interview with Cameron in the *Los Angeles Times* in which he claimed that IATSE has "stuck it to him" over *True Lies*, Di Tolla kicked off the row by asking the producer/director to explain why he was "bragging" that he would take his next production (*Spider Man*) not just out of California (after all, a lot of *True Lies* was shot in Florida), but out of the United States altogether. "Why do you want to... hire foreign workers when you are willing to spend over \$100 million on a budget for one motion picture?" demanded the IATSE boss in his 28 July advertisement.

Cameron struck back a week later in a letter, not to Di Tolla, but starting "Dear IATSE member..." Denying Di Tolla's assertion that IATSE has made all manner of compromises on *True Lies* ("aside from a few token concessions with trivial economic impact, my list of requests was met with a resounding 'No!'"), Cameron warned the token worker that "your leaders are choking film production to death", concluding: "if Mr Di Tolla is so concerned about losing American jobs to foreign labour, he should



Striking back: producer-director James Cameron is challenging the production workers' union following 'True Lies'

reconsider his negotiating tactics, or move aside and let me shoot here... non-union."

Now Mr Busy is not about to take sides in this dispute, but it does seem to me that if the gist of the "requests" presented by Cameron on *True Lies* was anything like that concluding paragraph, a resounding "No!" may have been the appropriate response.

The latest victim of the budget cuts that have accompanied the transformation of Berlin from the frontier flagship of German capitalism into just another big city with a depressed industrial hinterland looks like being that most nebulous of cultural institutions, the European Film Academy. On 14 July, Berlin's cultural senator, Ulrich Roloff-Mornin, announced that the city's funding of the EFA would end as of 1996. Berlin currently supplies the Academy with DM740,000 (£295,000) a year – a tidy sum, though rather less than the annual DM1 million it got before the wall came down.

What? I hear you exclaim. No more of those wonderful awards ceremonies with all those entertaining musical acts? No more Felix (the name of the award dished out)? No more of those... well, long lists of Academy members?

In point of fact, unless you were invited, it is unlikely that you have seen the awards ceremony since the first year (1988), when Channel 4 broadcast it live. These days, you're lucky to pick it up as a 3 a.m. filler on Superchannel. And for all the fuss that surrounded its establishment, it is difficult to think of anything else the EFA has achieved.

There are two options open now. One, the Academy ceases to exist. Two, it moves to another European capital, where any local grant will be matched by the European Union. One capital thought to be interested is Dublin, where huge amounts of public and private funding have gone into establishing an arts quarter in the old Temple Bar area, and which

will host a major EU cultural conference this December.

If the EFA were to transfer to a new location, it might just get the fresh lease of life it needs. Otherwise, few will mourn – or even notice – its passing.

● There have been a lot of doors banging open and shut in Gotham City this summer. Part three of the Caped Crusader saga is not far away, as readers will doubtless know – if not by reading about it, then through a simple process of deduction.

But although it is still recognisably part of the same franchise operated by the same franchise-holder (Warner Bros), *Batman Forever* – as it will be called – shares few key personnel with the first two movies. Director Tim Burton is no longer on board (he is planning a Catwoman sequel with Michelle Pfeiffer), having been replaced by honest journeyman Joel Schumacher (*Falling Down*, *The Client*). Well, maybe *The Lost Boys* and *Flatliners* showed a certain manic flair, but since then it has been sign, polish and deliver as far as Schumacher is concerned.

Michael Keaton was the next to go, turning down a great deal of money rather than don the latex for a third time. He was swiftly replaced by Val Kilmer, whose highest-profile role to date has been as Jim Morrison in *The Doors*. Then the knock-on effects really started.

Rene Russo, who held her own very creditably somewhere between the deadpan of Eastwood and the look-at-me-go histrionics of John Malkovich in *In the Line of Fire*, was all but signed up as the love interest. But with Kilmer in the cape, Russo seemed – not to put too fine a point on it – rather old for the part, although her agent has

spent a lot of time insisting she had other commitments. At first it was rumoured that she would be replaced by Sandra Bullock, who after *Demolition Man* and *Speed* deserves a medal for controlled performances in the presence of special effects.

Then Bullock signed for another project (rather appropriately, a romantic comedy called *While You Were Sleeping* about a woman who falls in love with a man in a coma), and it was finally announced that Nicole Kidman would appear opposite Kilmer. Apart from the fact that both their names begin with 'K', Mr Busy can think of no clear explanation for the final development. Come to think of it, Keaton was a 'K' person too: time to inspect someone's tea-leaves, I should have thought.

In case you're still interested, Robin Williams will not play the Riddler in *Batman Forever*. They've found someone even more manic: Jim Carrey, star of *Ace Ventura: Pet Detective* and *The Mask*. Now, don't someone tell me he was originally called Karrey...

One of the tacky-sad things about last winter's Olympic ice-queen conflict was the advertisements that appeared in various LA freesheets and even some of the film industry trade papers. They generally consisted of a Photo-Me portrait of some woman who looked vaguely like either Tonya Harding or Nancy Kerrigan, a claim that the subject could skate and a phone number. In the end, the Harding-Kerrigan telemovies came and went without making much of a dent in the ratings. After all, in flat contradiction of the basic rules of drama, we all know who did it and we all know who won.

More mainstream was the unseemly rush to sign up Oksana Baiul – who, in case you've forgotten, was the one who won the gold medal – for an acting career. Nothing much

came of that in the end, either. But the whole affair obviously still spreads a few ripples on the outer reaches of the pond called 'Fame'.

On 9 July, a low-budget outfit called Century Film Partners started production on an action thriller called 'Breakaway' which stars Tonya Harding, alongside two actors called Teri Thompson and Ray Dash Sr. Sadly, Mr Busy's investigations have come up with no further information on what this important oeuvre is all about.

● Fifteen years ago Volker Schlöndorff made what may well have been his last decent film, *Die Blechtrommel* (The Tin Drum), in which Oskar – the boy who stopped growing physically but continued to mature in other ways – was played by a diminutive 12-year-old called David Bennent.

Little was subsequently heard of Bennent. But recent rumours suggest that the director and the actor are about to be reunited in a biopic about Toulouse Lautrec, with Bennent playing the title role.

As any number of analysts have been quick to point out, this summer's surprise hit, 'Forrest Gump' – the fastest-earning film in

Paramount's history – spent ten years on the studio shelf before anyone could be persuaded that it was remotely viable. And as late as April, there were all kinds of rumours that the Paramount brass liked the then completed film a lot – but didn't quite know what to do with it. In the end, they took the easy way out and spent a massive amount on a blanket television and press campaign just before 'Gump' opened. Americans responded, and the rest is history – or at any rate history with Gump in it.

However, there are still lingering signs of the studio's lack of confidence in the project, not least the fact that when the film did become a hit, none of the tie-in merchandising was ready. Not, of course, that we are talking about anything so crass as video games and T-shirts. 'Gump' is a prestige movie and the main marketing tie-ins are a 'Mama Gump Cookbook' and a collection of the sayings of Forrest Gump. But these didn't start appearing until a month or so after the movie opened.

The one thing you could buy right away was the 'Forrest Gump' double CD. Place your orders now, folks. And that's all I have to say about that.



Runaway success: Tom Hanks in 'Forrest Gump'

● Now that cross-dressing is fashionable – Robin Williams as a Scottish matron resulted in one of the top five films of the decade, and Wesley Snipes and Patrick Swayze are currently dragging up in Beeban Kidron's *To Wong Foo, Thanks for Everything, Julie Newmar* – the film that first brought the idea to the mainstream, *La Cage aux folles*, is lined up for a US remake by United Artists.

Mike Nichols – Hollywood's Mr Upscale, who has shown the rare

knack of making the sensational tasteful and the tasteful sensational in a 30-year career that has included *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, *The Graduate*, *Catch-22*, *Carnal Knowledge* and most recently *Wolf* – is expected to direct. And, yes, you've guessed it: Robin Williams will star.

Also on the casting front, Robert Altman has apparently chosen a Mata Hari for his long-delayed biopic about the First World War spy. It will be Ute Lemper, the gravelly voiced German chanteuse, who recently worked with Altman on 'Pret-a-porter'.

Also reunited are Abel Ferrara and Christopher Walken, who began shooting a movie called 'Addiction' in mid-August. Odds are, it isn't a musical comedy.

● Finally, I have to announce the sad demise of the year's best title. Joe Dante, one-time Corman alumnus who hit his best form with *Gremlins*, has signed on to direct a movie called *Cat and Mouse*, whose main characters are the aforementioned animals.

The sad news is that the project's original title – before someone got cold feet – was Rupert and Murdoch.

BOMBAY NOTES

Beyond 'Bandit Queen'

Shekhar Kapur's new film *Bandit Queen* – a biopic of former outlaw leader Phoolan Devi – has been attacked for its excessive violence and protracted rape scenes, and its authenticity challenged by Devi herself. But according to Kapur, speaking on the Metro Channel's *Newstrack* show, Devi "is not who she was... she is political property now". What that property is worth, who owns it, and how it can be used became a public issue when Bombay's censors ended a month of suspense by savaging *Bandit Queen*, demanding ten major cuts. The gang rape, the young woman humiliated by being paraded naked and Devi's attack on her husband are all to go – making the film virtually unreleasable.

Bandit Queen would almost certainly have had a tough time with a censor committee set to implement a variety of recent guidelines including the elimination of "Slapping, beating, assaulting of women by kith and kin; any kind of violence that could be imitated by the public; violence on women or forcing them into prostitution." But what blew the top off was when Phoolan Devi herself – released from jail last year – entered the fray. Not invited to any of the several 'select' screenings in Delhi, what she has seen of the film has convinced her that it grossly misrepresents her life and she has filed a suit against the film-makers that could net her millions of rupees in damages. Substantiating her complaint is the widely held view that



in Kapur's biopic, "Rape is the main dish. Caste is the sauce that it swims in" (film-maker Arundhati Roy in *Sunday*). The censor board has taken Devi's side, objecting, for instance, to a credit title that claims the film is based on her prison diaries.

Bandit Queen's publicity build-up was almost bound to clash with Phoolan Devi's own. Ever since she emerged from Tihar jail a savvy, media-wise personality, married and settled down in Delhi's Bulmohar Park to write her official autobiography for an undisclosed French publisher, the former dacoit leader has become a star in her own right. She turned

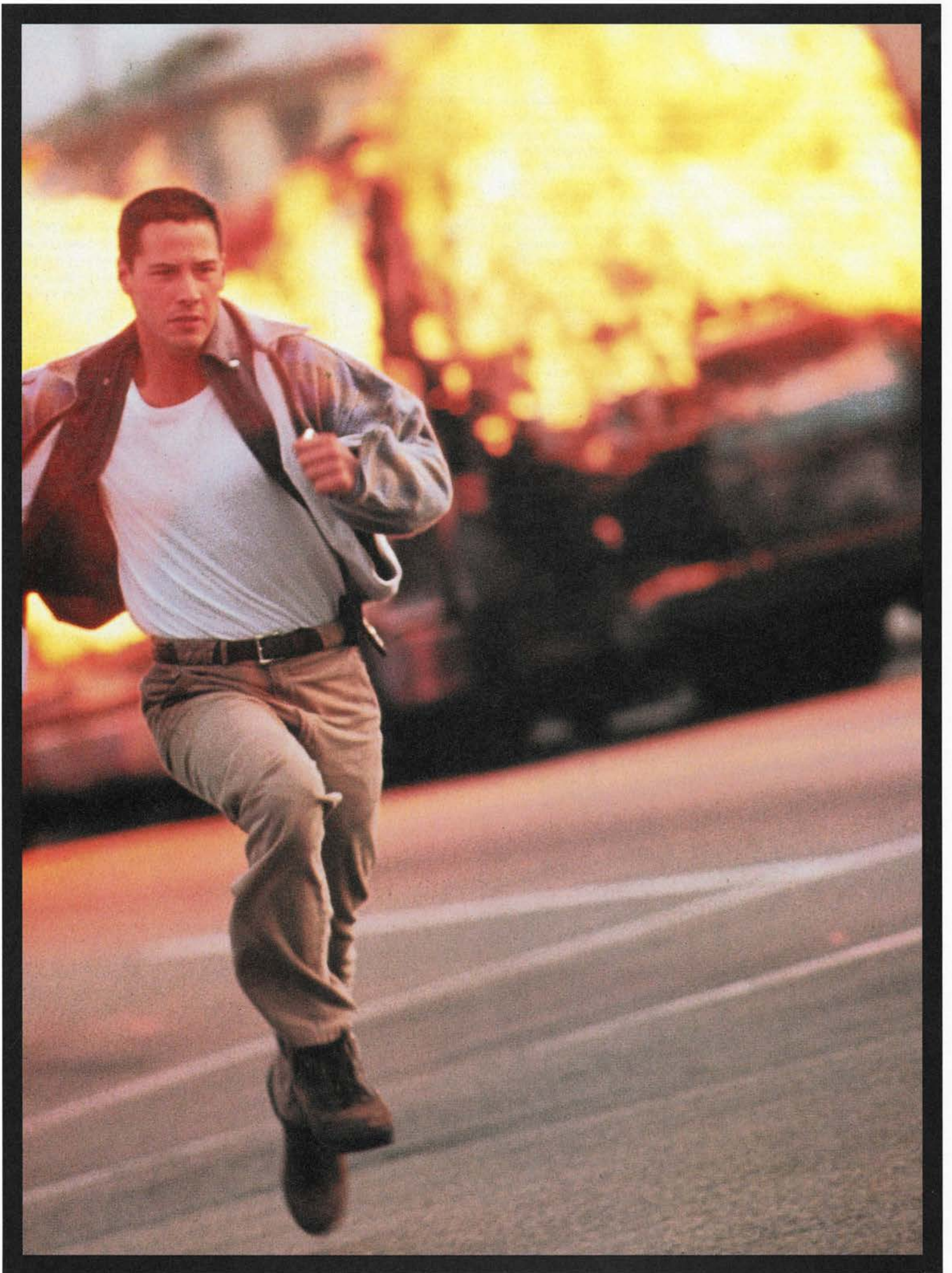
down the film producers' invitation to Cannes when she was refused an appearance fee, and is today set to exploit the same economic culture of glossies and TV chat-shows that Kapur's film is trying to woo.

But this conflict of rival business interests has ended up as an unlikely test case for a very different controversy featuring the censor board. Ever since the STAR-TV package entered India, and its Hindi channel Zee-TV became the primary advertising medium for the Hindi film industry, dozens of films have been made which exploit the fact that, beamed from Hong Kong, the channel falls outside the purview of India's censorship regulations. The resulting new trend for pornographic musicals reached epidemic proportions by the end of last year. The films come in the wake of a major boom in music sales, first with the audio-cassette revolution – cassette sales increased by 1,400 per cent between 1987 and 1988 – and then with the massively popular series of 'top 10' compilations on Zee, Metro and STAR's MTV-type Channel V. It is generally agreed that the trend was initiated by the 'anti-national' *Khalnayak* (1993), whose lead star Sanjay Dutt is currently in prison, implicated in the 12 March bombings. The notorious 'Choli ke peeche' number in *Khalnayak* was soon followed by the sexual gyrations of Govinda and Karishma Kapoor (for instance 'Sarkailo khatiya' – 'Move

your bed, I'm feeling cold' – in *Raja Babu*) and by Kapoor's solo 'Sexy sexy sexy mujhe log bole' ('People call me sexy') in *Khuddar*.

Among those attacking this trend are right-wing groups who give a specifically nationalist spin to the common complaint that the censors aren't doing anything. The Hindu Bhartiya Janata Party has been joined in this by Congress-I politicians such as the Indian Council for Cultural Relations chairman Vasant Sathe (whose policies as former Information and Broadcasting Minister ironically started off the TV revolution in the 80s) and Rajya Sabha deputy speaker Najma Heptullah. The crime isn't just that songs like 'Khada hai' ('It's erect') do violence to the glory of Indian civilisation, but that they do so via channels over which they have no control. The government responded in July with new censorship regulations that are draconian, to say the least.

Bandit Queen finds itself not so much up against these laws as against the neo-nationalism that backs them. Previously its success at Cannes and art-house minority-interest credentials might have got it past the committee. But today – in a conflict between a film-maker who comes out with obscure statements such as "Art is not factual, art is interpretative" and a properly repentant ex-bandit, all set to join Mulayam Singh Yadav's Socialist Party – it's no surprise whose side everybody is on. *Ashish Rajadhyaksha*



Cinema has often provided the pleasures of the rollercoaster. What is different about recent action movies such as 'Speed'?
By Richard Dyer

● It must have been the way I was saying it. When people have asked me if I've seen any good films lately, I've replied, "Oh yes, *Speed*," and they've looked startled. It's as if I wasn't saying the title of a film but lapsing into some ill-understood subcultural jargon: "Yeah, man - speed." Perhaps I lengthened the vowel or arched my body involuntarily, because they weren't entirely wrong. *Speed* is, like, speed.

In all truth, it isn't as much of a trip as one could imagine it being. There's nothing in it like the camera hanging out of the jeep in *Hatari!*, or skimming over Julie Andrews in *The Sound of Music*, or the hand-held prowling in *Wolfen*, none of the magnificent shock cuts and zooms of Hammer horror or the likes of Mario Bava and Dario Argento, let alone the thrillingly torrential cutting of the 'Odessa Steps' sequence in *Battleship Potemkin* or the eponymous tempest in *Storm Over Asia*. Nor is there the gross-out factor in *Speed* that might elevate it to late-night and video-cult status, none of the gore of even a mainstream movie such as *Under Siege* (kitchen knives in skulls, fingers in eyeballs), to say nothing of the I-can't-believe-I'm-seeing-this climaxes of films such as *Basket Case* or *The Re-animator* (but don't bother to check this out on the British release videos). Indeed, *Speed* teasingly draws back from delivering such an experience, even when it titillates us with the promise that it's about to show us a white, middle-class mother and baby smashed to smithereens.

Speed gets its rush from a sheer squandering of sensational situations. Keanu Reeves is a cop who has to deal with three desperate predicaments: a plummeting lift, a bus primed to explode if it drops to below 50 mph and an out-of-control subway train. One situation follows straight after the other, set in motion by an obscurely vengeful ex-cop (Dennis Hopper) with a genius for deadly remote-control technology. Any one of these variations on velocity would have been enough for most movies. *Speed* is like Sylvester Stallone dangling over the ravine at the start of *Cliffhanger* plus the office explosion in *Lethal Weapon 3* plus the train crash in *The Fugitive* plus the chase along the sunken canal in *Terminator 2*, all put end to end with no boring bits in between. No dodgy politics. No naff attempts at psychologising the villain: he's a nutcase. No mushy buddiness: the film barely pauses when Keanu's partner is blown to bits through his (Keanu's) lack of foresight. No elab-

orate excuses to get the camera to linger on the star's muscles: Keanu's not that kind of boy. And no love interest to send the kids into frenzies of squabbling and going to the loo: there is a girl (Sandra Bullock on fine form) and Keanu does get her, but it's all done on the run with only a quick clinch at the end. This is the movie as rollercoaster: all action and next to no plot.

The cinema has always had the potential to be like this. Whether or not it is true that the first audiences for the Lumière brothers' film of a train entering a station ducked in terror as it advanced towards them, the idea that they did has often seemed to be emblematic of what film is about. The Lumières ushered in a new technology, that has become ever more elaborate, revelling in both showing and creating the sensation of movement. *Train Arriving at a Station* and *Speed* belong to a distinguished lineage. It includes all those celebrations of movement so prized by earlier commentators on film: the simple documentary dwelling on movement, be it vast or tiny, train crashes or water fleas (to take oft-cited early examples); such staged delights as the Keystone Cops, cowboys and Indians, Fred and Ginger, climaxes à la Griffith; and all those attempts to make cinema move analogously to music, as in animated abstract ballets or 'symphonies' of the great modern cities. The lineage also includes, however, *This Is Cinerama*, Imax cinema presentations and now (in Portrush, Northern Ireland, at Granada Studios in Manchester, at the Trocadero in London's Piccadilly) the Showscan Dynamic Motion Simulator, a "magic chair" that promises to deliver "the ultimate fantasy: Reality". The celebration of sensational movement, that we respond to in some still unclear sense 'as if real', for many people is the movies.

I would not want to erect this into an absolute aesthetic principle, as some theorists have done. The stasis of film-makers such as Ozu, Duras and Akerman is just as authentically cinematic as the movement of Murnau, Minnelli or, indeed, Jan De Bont, the director of *Speed*. Yet stillness and contemplation are rare in popular cinema. The triumph of the word 'movie' over the more static 'pictures' or evocative 'flicks' is not just a product of US cultural imperialism; it also catches something of the sensation we expect when we go to the cinema.

It seems, though, that we seldom want the sense of movement and excitement, the speed, by itself. How many times does one want to ►

Lie back and enjoy: Keanu Reeves as the cop in 'Speed', giving us our thrills, opposite

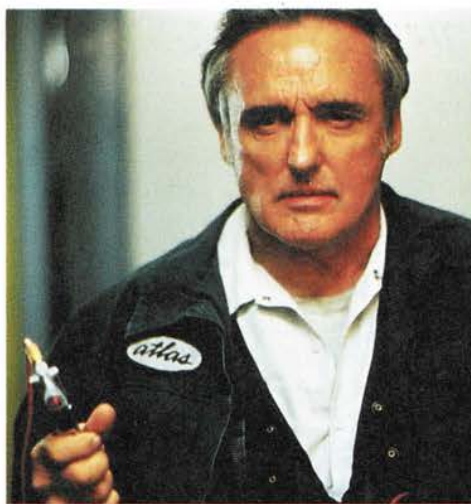
ACTION!

◀ visit the Imax or, probably, a Showscan Dynamic Motion Simulator? We generally want the exhilaration and rush embedded in a fiction. Such fictions situate the thrills. They refer us to the world. They do not usually pretend to show us the world as it really is, but they point to that world. They offer us thrills and elations we might seldom have, might think it impossible really to have, but they relate such imaginings of elation to the human co-ordinates of the real world: the environments we live in, the social categories in which we have our being. In the process, they propose and legitimate kinds of thrills, and who gets them and who pays the price.

In contemporary cinema, it is the action film that most characteristically delivers speed in a story. One has only to think of the stars of such films – Schwarzenegger, Stallone, Bruce Willis, Harrison Ford, Steven Seagal, Jean-Claude Van Damme, and now Keanu Reeves – to have an indication of whose thrills are being legitimated: straight white men. This doesn't mean that no one else can possibly imagine having the thrills alongside Arnie or Keanu, but it does contribute to the reproduction of a masculine structure of feeling. Extreme sensation is represented as experienced not within the body, but in the body's contact with the world, its rush, its expansiveness, its physical stress and challenge. There is nothing wrong with such feelings of extreme and, as it were, worldly sensation, but the movies tie them to male characters and male environments, suggesting they are really only appropriate to men. This is not a matter of saying that I want – let alone my wanting women to want – to have quite this kind of sensational experience, but that there is a deeper, underlying pattern of feeling, to do with freedom of movement, confidence in the body, engagement with the material world, that is coded as male (and straight and white, too) but to which all humans need access.

In *Speed*, as in most action films of the past 15 or more years, it is not quite true to say that only straight white men get the thrills. We now have a well-established pattern, whereby the hero is accompanied by white women and men of colour (rarely women of colour) who are also exposed to the dangers that bring the thrills. Though the screaming heroine or cringing black man do still crop up, women and men of colour are nowadays more likely to be allowed to be tough and brave, to be able to handle themselves and often to have skills the white hero doesn't possess. Even if they don't start out that way, they eventually make the grade. The figure of the black police chief or crack platoon leader who provides back-up at crucial moments is a staple of the genre, as is the moment when the heroine finally has to kill, deliberately and efficiently, to save the cornered hero.

Speed loses its potential black helper, the bus driver in the central segment, early on, leaving Keanu and his white helper to save the busload of mainly non-white passengers. The helper, though, is a woman (Sandra Bullock). Unlike her (literally) poor fellow commuters, she's travelling by bus only because she has had her driving licence taken away for speeding (the film is



Simple sensations: Dennis Hopper as the vengeful ex-cop, for whom evil is a perfect pleasure, above; Keanu Reeves, opposite

not without a sense of humour). She has to take charge of the bus when the driver is incapacitated and performs brilliantly, managing sharp corners and interweaving across busy traffic lanes, all at top speed, splendid aplomb and verve mixed with terror. She does get the thrills of extreme physical danger and the exultation of mastery of a machine. Yet *Speed* still conforms to the pattern of contemporary action films by constituting her as helper. She's not the main man. Conan (in the Schwarzenegger films) and Indiana Jones are two of the many heroes who now do their thing with women and black people in tow, but never quite as equals, never with quite the same access to the speed of worldly sensation.

Worldly thrills are seldom bought at no price. In the classic Western and jungle adventure film, to take relatively easy targets, it is the native people who pay the biggest price for the white man's exhilaration. With *Rambo* or a film like *Under Siege*, it's anyone who gets in the way, which generally means other males – many action films are indeed mainly affairs between men. *Speed* largely avoids giving us time to note death: there are innocent bystanders knocked off and some police, but by and large the film is oddly benign. Old ladies petrified to leap from lifts, babies in prams, poor commuters of colour on the unstoppable bus, such people are safe in *Speed*, not expendable as they might be in many other films. The price is elsewhere, in things. It is the transport system itself that is smashed about: cars, lorries, barriers, planes and even the roadway in a final eruption of a subway train from below. It is an orgy of destruction of one of the great frustrations of modern urban living – getting about.

It is not impossible to imagine action movies otherwise. They don't have to be about the destruction of subject peoples and the natural environment, they don't have to centre forever on straight white men. The shifts in gender and race roles I've already suggested indicate the possibility of change. The problem with *Passenger 57* (which in any case was no worse than *Under Siege*, say, or *Die Hard 2*) was not that its hero was a black man, and certainly not Wesley Snipes' inadequacy as a star, but dull plotting and direction. There are many precedents for the woman as hero of adventure, notably Leni

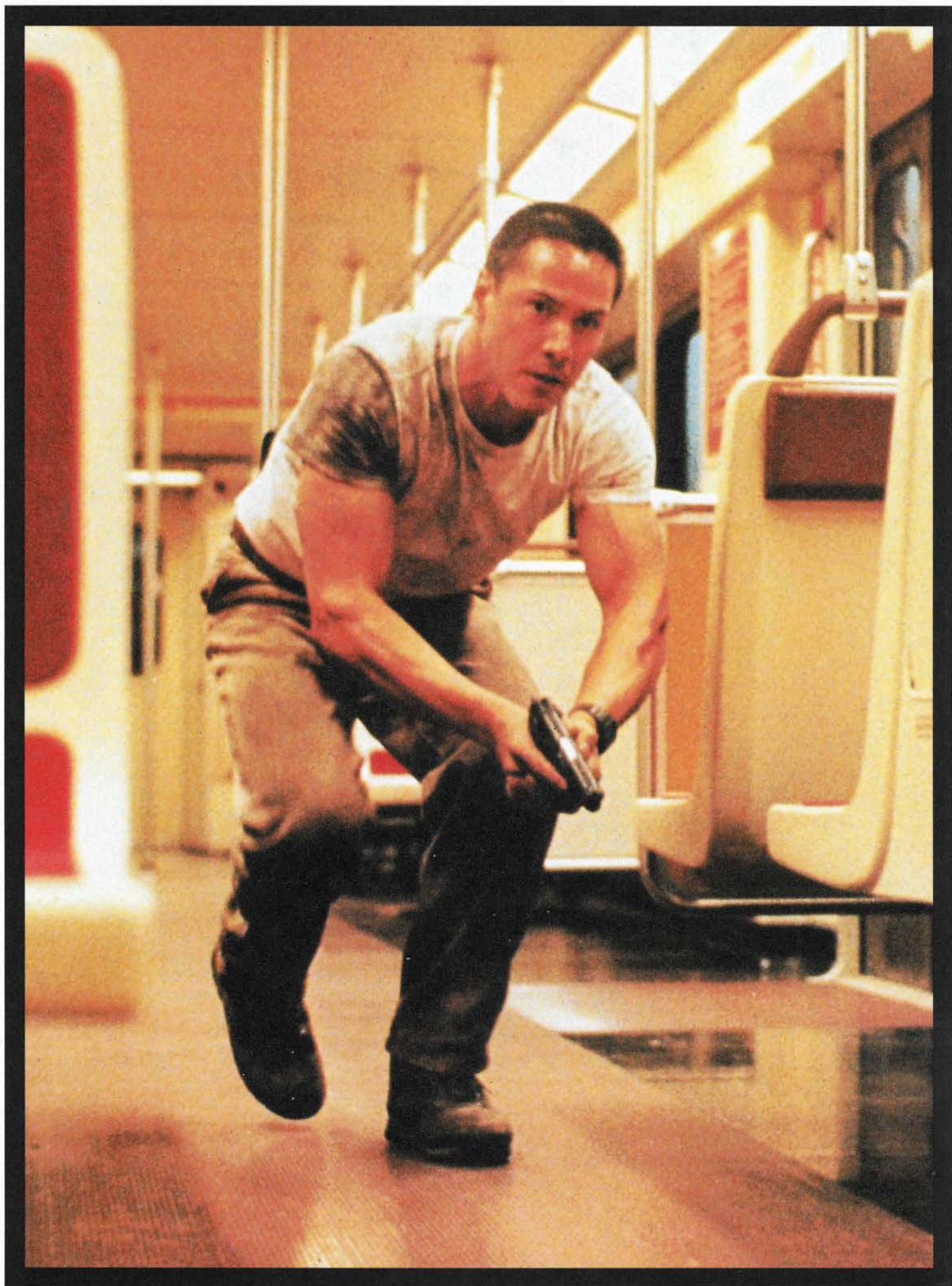
Riefenstahl's mountain films, *Fearless Nadia* (the Indian star celebrated in the wonderful recent film *Fearless: The Hunterwali Story*), Sigourney Weaver in the *Alien* films, and the 'women warriors' discussed by Yvonne Tasker in her recent book *Spectacular Bodies*.

Yet I would not want to underestimate how difficult it will be to make it normal and unremarkable to have people of colour and women as subjects of worldly sensation. Experience of space has race and gender dimensions which set limits to how plausible or exceptional one may find a representation. Colour ghettoisation, for instance, instils assumptions about space that are hard to shake. White people often say they are fearful of going into black ghettos, but seldom stop to consider that such ghettos are themselves surrounded on all sides by the powerful white ghetto. Entering and being in white space can be profoundly intimidating, however at ease Wesley Snipes or Danny Glover may appear in it on screen. Even more fundamentally, perhaps, much cross-cultural research suggests that we start learning our relation to our environment from the moment of cradling, and that we learn it differently according to gender. To feel that it is OK to be unrestrained, to kick against what surrounds you, to thrust out into the world is what boys learn, not girls. To see women strain against the world may be inspirational, but also at some psychic level unbelievable. Heroes of action who are other than male and white (and straight and able-bodied) are still going to feel exceptional for some time to come.

Action movies as the most common contemporary form of the cinema of sensation ally the speed they offer with white male characters. Women and people of colour may be let in on the action, but either in secondary roles or with a sense of their exceptionality. Yet the experience action movies offer is in another way not so traditionally masculine at all.

To go to an action movie is to sink back in the seat and say, "show me a good time". Maybe we also cringe, shield our eyes, convulse our bodies – maybe we are often not so much more sophisticated than those putative Lumière audiences – but mentally we abandon ourselves to the illusion. Many have seen this as the essence of nearly all film experience, no matter what the genre; it underlies the notion of 'classical cinema' that has become so entrenched in film studies.

Such surrender to pleasure has greatly worried cultural, and not just film, criticism. Perhaps the image that most famously captures this intellectual worry about movies as sensation is that of the feelies in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*: the masses hooked up to a wash of sensations as part of an enforced passivity that keeps them mindlessly turning the cogs of capitalism. There is a point here. Passivity in life, in politics, is problematic: it means acquiescing to a status quo that damages people along class, gender, racial, sexual and other lines; for many women lying back within heterosexual sex has not always meant enjoying it; and there are besides always others who pay the real price for the megabuck sensations of the world's well-to-do minority. Yet it is hard ▶



◀ not to see in Huxley's hatred something else: a libidinal fear of passivity itself.

Modern discussion of cultural pleasures tends to take sexuality as the founding form of all enjoyment, as the appetite *par excellence*. (I look forward to a return to theory and criticism which takes eating as its primary metaphor for understanding enjoyment.) Pleasures that are approved or disapproved of get mapped on to ideas of what sex is like. The notions of active and passive have been made to do a great deal of muddled but suggestive work, ineluctably correlated with gender roles within heterosexuality. On the one hand, proper gender identity has seemed to be realised in the performance of active male and passive female coital roles. On the other hand, a phantasm of sex as assault has haunted the minds of heterosexual male intellectuals. As a result, when they have imagined passivity in sex they have imagined something terrifying. Passivity is thus both demeaning for a man, because it makes him like a woman, and frightening too. So it is with all delectation – since sex provides the measure of all pleasures. The worst thing imaginable is to go to the cinema to lie back and enjoy it. Which suggests another terror, lurking beneath the fear of being like, and being treated like, a woman. For what kind of a man is it who lies back and enjoys it? A queer, of course. Queers of every sex know that passivity need not be alarming, but then that's queers for you, not a palatable message for chaps hell-bent on being straight.

In relation to adventure movies, there is a delicious paradox here. Such movies promote an active engagement with the world, going out into it, doing to the environment; yet enjoyment of them means allowing them to come to you, take you over, do you. When Jean-Claude Van Damme kicks his way out of trouble, when Harrison Ford leaps into the torrent in *The Fugitive*, when Keanu lies on his back under the careering bus in *Speed*, we may identify with them, imagine the rush of excitement as we brace ourselves against, and master, the world; but we're also letting ourselves be carried along, going with the flow of the movie, ecstatically manipulated.

The favoured position of hardcore fans for watching action movies in the cinema is slumped in the seat with legs slung over the seat in front. This is an excellent position for anal sex as well as for cunnilingus and fellatio. Come to think of it, for the male viewer action movies have a lot in common with being fellated. At the level of cultural imagery, the fellatee is considered the butch one – perhaps because he supplies the phallus, perhaps because fellatio facilitates a masculine dissociation of mind and body more readily than face-to-face coital positions. Whatever the reason, men cherish the illusion that their masculinity is not compromised by being fellated. Yet it's the other person, male or female, who's doing the work, really being active. So it is with action movies. In imagination, men can be Arnie or Keanu; in the seat, it's Arnie or Keanu pleasuring them. Now that's what I call speed. *'Speed' opens on 30 August and is reviewed on page 51 of this issue*



Simon Louvish on speed and the silents

In early 1970 I hid myself to the Chalk Farm Roundhouse to an event called 'Cinemacity', which consisted of non-stop viewings of new and old films endured on the hardest seats in Christendom. There was Jean-Luc Godard's 'One Plus One', an American independent movie about a man who made his enemies into sausages, and, out of the past, Harold Lloyd, in person, a spry 77-year-old (though he was, sadly, to die the following year) bounding on the stage after a revivalist screening of his 1927 movie 'The Kid Brother'.

In 1970, of course, we all wore hair down to here, passed the joint from hand to hand and thought John Lennon would live forever. Edward Heath had not yet displaced the other Harold, Wilson, milk was sixpence a pint and you could work your way through film school serving in Wimpy Bars.

I mention this only to highlight the obvious pitfalls of nostalgia. The recent re-release of Harold Lloyd's last silent feature, 'Speedy' (1928), and the revival of the silent film in general, sparked by the inimitable David Gill and Kevin Brownlow, take us back to a vanished age in which we can imagine a pristine innocence, if not in life, then in art.

For the general public, there is often an equation between the silent movie and speed. Archivists and historians have toiled to repair the popular image of a frenetic, almost pixilated movement, juddering in blurred leaps across the screen. Some of us were even brought up on 8 mm Laurel and Hardys, can you believe, while real snobs hoard their 9.5 mm collection. Of course, the whole point of the earliest movies was that they moved, and film comedy, the chase sequence, was the epitome of the motion picture



Moving upwards: Lloyd as the gauche boy-next-door in 'Speedy'

– the Keystone Cops, Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton et al.

Yet if one looks at 'Speedy', whose very title, Harold's name, builds on this expectation, a great ambivalence about speed is apparent. The story is this: Harold "Speedy" Swift is a baseball-besotted young man who can't keep down a job but is in love with the wholesome Jane Dillon, whose grandpa, Pop Dillon, runs the last horse-drawn tram in New York City. The evil railroad mogul Carter wants to get rid of Pop's tram, by fair means or foul, so that he can run his trains through the city. In the characteristic finale, Harold has four minutes to drive the stolen horse-tram across the city so it can keep its scheduled deadline.

This is, of course, a hardy perennial of the movies since before Griffith. Only Griffith could intercut a car-versus-train chase to prevent an innocent man's execution with sequences of Christ at Golgotha. But the silent comedy made the race against time its own. An iconic formula, its finest moment, perhaps, was Buster Keaton's rush to marry his sweetheart in 'Seven Chances' (1925), dodging both papier mâché boulders and a horde of frustrated would-be brides to win true love and \$7 million.

Cars against trains, men against cars. We should realise, with a jolt, since Hal Roach died only last year, that in the 20s people aged 40 or over remembered an era when the horseless carriage was a mere curiosity, and that the maximum speed of a Model T Ford was a coruscating 45 mph. Small wonder the movies used speeded-up action to stimulate their voracious audience. Laurel and Hardy could get laughs repeatedly by smashing up cars, squashing them in mangles, having them collapse under their weight, and, in 'Two Tars' (1928), sparking off the greatest vehicular destruction of all time in the rolling dominoes of a massive traffic jam. Snub Pollard could attract audiences with his amazing bullet car, which attached itself to other cars with a magnet. Trains, an older, mid-nineteenth-century reality, still fascinated, with Keaton's mechanical nostalgia of 'Our Hospitality' and 'The General'.

Speed is double-edged, both loved and lampooned, in these movies. Harold's rush in 'Speedy' is, after all, to preserve the slowest transport in New York City. His allies in foiling the railroad baron's thugs are Pop's geriatric buddies, who use the tram as their clubhouse, with their Civil War rallying call. The thugs are routed with rolling pins, dustbin lids, the steam-iron of a Chinese laundryman, the tools of small-town trade, old commerce.

But perhaps the most potent expression of speed, as a metaphor, in 'Speedy', is social mobility. The great engine of Harold's character, the boy-next-door with his ill-fitting suit and round glasses, is his zeal, his enthusiasm, his drive to get on in life and make good. He builds on the quintessential American myth of benign competition, of achieving success without harming others. Success is, despite his gaucheness and naivety, an attribute of his character, of his moral force, his fight against unfairness and bad luck. Harold must succeed because he has self-confidence. He is the very model of positive thinking.

Harold can chuck in his jobs because they are steps on a ladder which, like a rite of passage, he



In two minds: Harold Lloyd in 'Speedy', caught between loving and lampooning speed

must ascend. He fails as a taxi driver because a cop keeps catching him speeding, but he is only speeding because his passengers, culminating in the legendary Babe Ruth, whom he rushes to his baseball game, require it. Basically he is a lover of older values, epitomised when, with his girlfriend Jane, he is given a lift back from Coney Island in the back of a friend's furniture truck, and they play the married home-lovers, sitting on the sofa with slippers and pipe, while the truck rushes through the city. Coney Island itself, the Mecca of speed and crowded frenzy, tests Lloyd's zeal and stamina to destruction. Ultimately it is the old-time, small-town values which win through: thrift, honesty, dedication and hard work. Speed takes you where you want to go, but where you came from, and who you are, makes your fortune.

If we leap forward, Lloyd-like, in time, scaling the building of 'Safety Last' and 'Feet First', Harold's climbing sagas, with our fingers and toes, we arrive at Hollywood's latest obsession with speed, machines, technology, transport. From Spielberg onwards, the industry has rediscovered the popularity of the old-time chase, the thrills and spills of pursuit. But what we are pursuing is no longer peace of mind and the slippers and pipe at the happy end of a hard day, but, in most cases, sheer survival.

The hero is no longer the small-town boy,

but the urban robot, the man of steel, Arnold Schwarzenegger. Watch him in 'Terminator 2', literally a machine, rushing to save us humans from the future of our own folly.

Speed is no longer a friend. In the current release 'Speed', cool cop Keanu Reeves goes into overdrive to thwart a bomber whose fiendish device on a bus will explode if the speed falls below 50 mph. At least O. J. Simpson confounded the trend by cruising down the Los Angeles freeways at a leisurely 45 mph (top speed of a Model T Ford, remember!). But that's real life, not the movies. The Terminators chase down the superhighways in cars, trucks, vans, giant containers. Arnold pursues the nuclear-stealing terrorists in 'True Lies' with a Harrier jet, in downtown Miami. A nice touch, a machine that can both rush and hover. But speed is certainly out of control. And social mobility works only downwards, to the pit, to hell, to ultimate failure.

Of course, in 'True Lies' Arnold also ends up with his wife, Jamie Lee Curtis, in their ersatz home from home, but in fact they're awaiting the call to action as spies. They can only be fulfilled in being somebody else. Arnold's commercial success is that he understands this. Nobody wants to be, like Harold Lloyd, who they are any more. Who we are is too small, too limiting, too frightening. We must be larger than life, and

faster, and meaner, and more prepared to tread over the bodies.

American comedy has shrunk, to Woody Allen's mousehole. In it the nervous urban wreck crouches, contained in a never-never-land of New York's Upper West Side, toying with adultery and spying on the murderous neighbours. He dreams not of where he is going, because he is only travelling towards death, and, as he moans in 'Stardust Memories', matter itself is decaying. The whole universe is shrinking to a dot. What is the point in a race between a man and a car if spaceships are being launched, completely in vain, towards Mars?

In 'Who Framed Roger Rabbit', a plot similar to that of Lloyd's 'Speedy' is unfolded. The villains are plotting to tear up LA's trams, to make way for the superspeed of freeways. The heroes are cartoon people, the only persons who can lay claim to some primal innocence any more. Toons are allowed to be who they are; the rest of us must make do with the masks we can manufacture – or buy. It is small wonder we might rush to the video shop to purchase the latest silent revival. Harold Swift may be a myth, but at least he acts out of some central core, some real identity. It's not the speed, or the silence, or a retro taste in design that appeals. It's common humanity.

● 'Speedy' is released on Connoisseur Video

● "Tai luan," said my favourite masseur, again and again. "Too chaotic." He was referring specifically to the working conditions in the Beijing public bath-house where he is based, and to the redevelopment plans for the immediate neighbourhood, but he might just as well have been coining the new watchword for the city as a whole. Beijing in 1994 is alive with chaos.

You no longer see many of the laminated Mao talismans that hung above the dashboards of most city taxis a couple of years ago, but the fashion for Maoist kitsch has moved upmarket. Beijing's sudden rash of 'theme restaurants' includes several that recreate "the Cultural Revolution experience" at prices to stun. Xiangyang Tun (Sunflower Village), for example, in the western suburb Haidian, offers peasant staples such as corn bread, rice gruel and bean curd in both communal refectories and private dining rooms, the former decked out with garish murals of the kind popular in the early 70s, the latter named after "model revolutionaries" and festooned with period newspapers and other memorabilia. Across town in the Chaoyang district, the Bai Brothers' new Dai Nationality Village Restaurant claims to offer a taste of tribal life in Yunnan (the Dai are the region's largest ethnic minority), complete with wooden-hut decor, costumed waiters and dancers; you'd be able to shrug it off as a Chinese answer to Disneyland if you weren't expected to drink fresh snake and turtle blood as aperitifs and later get through a plate of crunchy fried scorpions and grubs.

The major cultural events of the season in Beijing have been Lin Zhaohua's new production of Goethe's *Faust* at the Central Drama Academy - in which some have detected an allusive relevance to the impending struggle for leadership of the Communist Party - and the long-awaited release of rock star Dou Wei's first album *Hei Meng* (*Black Dream*), an eclectic piece of work that ranges from neo-psychedelics to 'world music' pop. There's been nothing to match either in Mainland cinema this summer; but then, there's been hardly any cinema at all. The movie business, too, is in chaos.

The crisis in China's film industry is in large part of the authorities' own making. The Film

Bureau cannot be blamed for the mass desertion of a once-faithful audience, or for the massive rise in ticket prices, but everything it has done to tackle these problems has made the situation worse. Last year the Film Bureau ended China Film Corporation's monopoly on domestic distribution and foreign sales and told the studios to stop relying on subsidies and overdrafts and to start distributing and selling their own productions. The most recent afterthought has been an edict permitting the studios to negotiate a percentage of box office directly with the cinemas showing their films. But what films? The Film Bureau's plan was evidently to shift the film industry from the public to the private sector, but it forgot to install competent management in any of the supposedly self-supporting studios. Not one of the country's 16 studios is run by a person with genuine expertise in production, marketing, distribution or sales, much less the kind of flair it takes to conceive and develop hit movies. The only studio head who did have a measure of that flair was Wu Tianming of the Xi'an Studio, who has lived in California since the start of 1989; he made his first return visit to China this year, only to be met by a series of ministerial snubs. The nervous bureaucrats now running the studios prefer to produce nothing rather than risk going deeper into debt.

At the same time, the Film Bureau has acted to curb all three areas of film-making that did see growth in the past year or so. Still smarting from the fact that Tian Zhuangzhuang's *The Blue Kite* slipped through their fingers, the authorities have introduced tough new legislation to control foreign-financed films by Mainland directors that includes stipulations (such as the insistence that original negatives stay in China until the film has cleared censorship) which will at best discourage such productions. They have also acted to limit the number of co-productions in any one year to 30 and insist that the Mainland partner in such ventures must share in both investment and profits, provisions which chiefly affect the numerous Hong Kong productions shot in China in recent years, ranging from art movies such as Clara Law's *Temptation of a Monk* and Stanley Kwan's *Hong Meigui*, *Bai Meigui* (*Red Rose*, *White Rose*) to ►

CHAOS AND ANGER

Blacklisted directors in China, stunning images from Taiwan and top Hollywood imports in Hong Kong are among the discoveries in Tony Rayns' Chinese report





Inside out: Brigitte Lin
as a big-time heroin
smuggler in Wong Kar-Wai's
'The Ashes of Time'

◀ the countless remakes of martial arts genre 'classics' by Tsui Hark and others.

And the Film Bureau has signalled its anger at unauthorised independent production by blacklisting the film- and video-makers who made and exported films and tapes last year. The blacklisted directors are Tian Zhuang-zhuang (self-employed since he persuaded Beijing Film Studio to fire him), Zhang Yuan, Wang Xiaoshuai, He Yi (aka He Jianjun), Ning Dai (director of the tape *A Film Is Stopped*, which documents the official action against Zhang Yuan last December), Wu Wenguang and the video collective that calls itself the SWYC Group. Chinese citizens and companies are prohibited from hiring or working with any of these people to make features, shorts, advertising films or music videos.

I ran into many of these blacklisted directors in Beijing this summer, and found them all cheerful and busy; they are obviously under some stress, but seem remarkably unintimidated by the official sanctions against them. It was encouraging to see that they have no shortage of friends and supporters. It was also encouraging to find that Chen Kaige was about to start shooting *Temptress Moon*, a romantic triangle drama set in 1920, co-produced by Hong Kong's Tomson Group and Shanghai Film Studio; evidently his producer Xu Feng has found a way to retain control of the negative to protect her investment. Zhang Yimou, however, is not so lucky; his project *Shanghai Triads* (to be financed by the French company UGC) is in pre-production, but has still not had its script passed by the Film Bureau. Assuming that Zhang gets a go-ahead soon, the stage is set for a showdown between him and his erstwhile collaborator Chen Kaige. Their films are both to be love-triangle stories with gangsterish elements, set in more or less the same period and shot on more or less the same locations in Anhui, Suzhou and Shanghai. How will Cannes cope with both of them?

Despite all the obstacles, a few Chinese directors are managing to get films made. I caught up with Li Shaohong in Beijing Film Studio, working on the sound mix for her new film *Hongfen* (it means 'blusher', as in make-up) and saw three reels of her work-in-progress. She has

chosen an extremely interesting subject – the rehabilitation of prostitutes after the Communists took power in 1949 – and seems to have found the optimum tone for a story that takes on board all the contradictions of that period. One scene in particular, of a stage performance of the Yan'an drama *The White-Haired Girl*, during which both the audience and the cast get carried away by revolutionary fervour, is a comic gem.

I also saw a fine-cut of actor Jiang Wen's first feature as director, an archetypal male rite-of-passage story called *Yanguang Canlan de Rizi* (*In the Heat of the Sun*). With salty dialogue by novelist Wang Shuo, the film goes through the predictable scenes of gang horseplay, furtive voyeurism and the first hesitant steps towards romance; what makes it different from a hundred other movies is that it is set during the Cultural Revolution and its protagonist is a young Red Guard. Its picture of the period has none of the angst or political recriminations seen in other accounts; the political machinations off-screen serve chiefly to justify the hero's absence from school and the occasional on-screen rumble. My one regret was that Jiang (star of *Red Sorghum*, *Black Snow*, *Hibiscus Town* and many others) didn't resist the temptation of casting himself as the protagonist grown up; a redundant coda shows him revisiting the sites of his youthful follies.

The strongest of all the new films in China is Zhou Xiaowen's *Ermo*, a movie born of two levels of frustration. One level is the director's own: the film started out as an independent production, made on the rebound from a series of bruising disappointments at Xi'an Film Studio and curtailed involvement in a Hong Kong-financed chase thriller. (It didn't help Zhou's morale either that his debut feature *Tamen Zheng Nianqing/In Their Prime* was banned on the eve of its release in 1986 and has never been seen anywhere, or that the best of his later films, *Heishan Lu/Black Mountain*, has only just been cleared for export – five years late.) In the event, Zhou ran out of money during production but had the good fortune to be rescued by entrepreneur Chen Kunming, one of the burgeoning new breed of Mainland businessmen in Hong Kong. Chen cleared Zhou's debts and

Assuming that Zhang Yimou gets a go-ahead for 'Shanghai Triads' soon, the stage looks set for a showdown between him and his erstwhile collaborator Chen Kaige

paid for the film to be completed, thereby becoming its producer; he has already gone on to finance a multipart television series about the Fifth Generation directors.

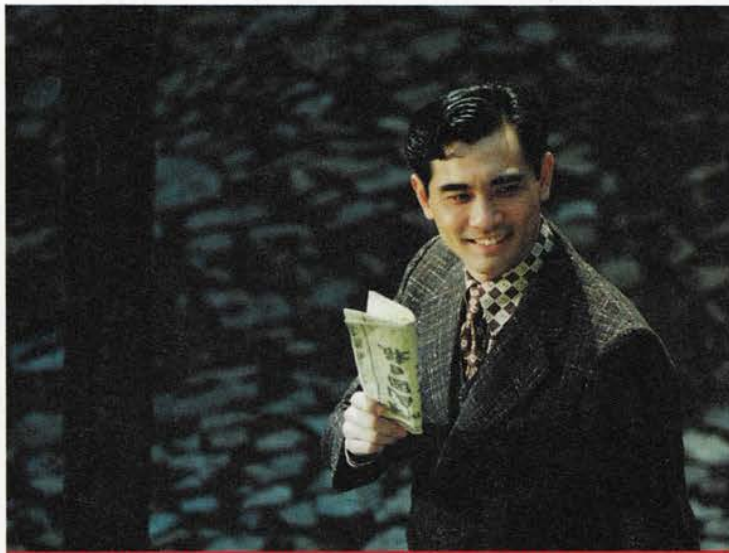
The other level of frustration is the eponymous heroine's: Ermo (played to perfection by Mongolian actress Alia) is a doughty peasant woman who sets her heart on owning the largest television set in her village and stops at nothing to get it. The film is a wry comic fable about China's current chaos – a confusion of materialism, amorality and hangovers from feudalism and communism – made from a clear and carefully thought-through moral point of view. Among other things, this demolishes the evasions and special pleading of Zhang Yimou's superficially similar *Story of Qiu Ju*. The film has just won its first international prize (at Locarno) and will certainly go on to earn Zhou Xiaowen his overdue place as an important Fifth Generation director.

Ermo is very good, but some of the films made in Taiwan and Hong Kong this summer are even better: Tsai Ming-Liang in Taipei and Wong Kar-Wai in Hong Kong have both come up with movies that look like future classics. They, too, are working in difficult circumstances. The market for Chinese movies has collapsed in both territories; the biggest hits of the summer in Hong Kong are *Speed* and *The Flintstones*, with *The Lion King* not too far behind. This is the first time since the mid-60s that Hollywood imports have outgrossed local hits, a phenomenon that has sent waves of shock through the industry.

Taiwan, of course, has no film industry left to speak of. There are signs that the government-owned Central Motion Picture Corporation, fortified by its international success with Ang Lee's films, is getting back into regular production with a string of low-budget movies by new directors, but most other producers are



In near silence: Tsai Ming-Liang's 'Vive l'amour'



Chinese shoot: Winston Chao in Stanley Kwan's 'Red Rose, White Rose'

ready to stop trying. Hou Xiaoxian has parted (amicably) from his long-standing line producer Zhang Huakun, and (less amicably?) from his financier Qiu Fusheng of Era International; he has teamed up with an advertising agency to produce the first feature by his regular script-writer Wu Nianzhen, and he told me that he expects his own new feature to be financed from Japan. Every other ambitious director in Taiwan is now in the same position as Hou: looking for backing from quarters not previously associated with film production and relying on overseas markets to replace the audience that has gone missing at home.

Is there a relationship between the economic collapse of the industry and the rise of films about emotional and spiritual confusion? Last year's fevered dream-pieces (Huang Mingchuan's *Bodo*, He Ping's *18* and Yu Weiyan's *Moonlight Boy*, not forgetting Hou Xiaoxian's more languorous *Puppetmaster* have paved the way for another group of movies exploring inner needs. Stan Lai's follow-up to *The Peach Blossom Land* is *Fei Xia A-Da* (*The Red Lotus Society*), which traces a young man's quest through various venal sectors of present-day society for a Master who can teach him the secret art of 'vaulting' – the achievement of weightlessness, as seen in countless martial arts novels and movies. And Wu Nianzhen's directorial debut *Duo-sang* (*A Borrowed Life*) reaches for an emotional rapprochement that was never fully achieved in reality: frankly autobiographical and sometimes almost embarrassingly candid, the film reconstructs Wu's memories of his father, a miner who died of emphysema in 1990. The *Padre Padrone* issues about the gap between an educated son and his under-educated father are intensified (and made very culture-specific) by the fact that the father – born in the years of Japanese colonial rule – identifies as Japanese, whereas the son is naturally Chinese.

Taiwan, nominally a Confucian society, actually revels in its own disorder, and no analysis of the current stresses and strains has been more persuasive than Edward Yang's *A Confucian Confusion*. The film has shed nearly 15 minutes since Cannes, and now comes divided into chapters, each prefaced by a line of

dialogue from the coming scene. The result is tighter, more focused and more sharply satirical than it was before; the brilliant dovetailing of plots and sub-plots asserts an aesthetic order that trumps the social chaos the film describes with such gusto.

But the star diagnostician of Taipei's urban malaise this summer is Tsai Ming-Liang, who has followed the haunting *Rebels of the Neon God* with a near-miss to a masterpiece. *Aiqing Wansui* (*Vive l'amour*) is around two hours long but has less than 30 minutes of dialogue, most of it desultory. It has three main characters: a middle-aged woman who lives alone and longs to be loved; a young gay man who has left home and longs to love someone; and another young man, slightly older, who neither loves anyone nor feels any need to be loved. Tsai delves into the crevices of their unvoiced passions with humour, wit and heart-wrenching sympathy; he also exercises a dazzling formal control of his narrative and imagery. Hard to guess if this will do any better in the Taiwan market than the films by Yang, Wu and Lai, but I'll bet it makes a splash when it competes in Venice.

Also heading for Venice – if it gets finished in time – is the second of two new films from Hong Kong director Wong Kar-Wai. *Dong Xie Xi Du* (*The Ashes of Time*) has already been in production for nearly two years; it was shot back-to-back with its own parody (directed by Jeff Lau), and that got released in February 1993. I saw it in rough-cut on the Steenbeck, and found that all the rumours are true. It does replace the missing Part 2 of *Days of Being Wild* by transposing its cast and themes to an imprecise period setting; it is a wholesale reinvention of the martial chivalry genre; and Wong and cinematographer Chris Doyle have come up with some of the most stunning images to reach the screen since the heyday of Sternberg and Lee Garmes. Like *Days of Being Wild*, it is going to be a movie in which the story occurs between scenes rather than in them, and it will rely fairly heavily on voiceovers to bring viewers up to speed with what is going on.

Under pressure from a producer in Taiwan, Wong interrupted the editing to make *Chongqing Senlin* (*Chungking Express*), which went from first day of shooting to premiere in almost

exactly three months. Chris Doyle shot most of this too (and provided his own apartment in Hong Kong as one of the main locations), and the mixture of visual dazzle and hand-held urgency covers some of the gaps and short-cuts to be found in the plotting. But the film is anyway a triumph.

It is divided into two parts, both of them featuring lovelorn cops who get tangled up with women who are wrong for them. In the first part, Kaneshiro Takeshi tries to pick up Brigitte Lin in a late-night bar, unaware that she is a big-time heroin smuggler who has spent the evening hunting down (and being hunted by) some absconding drug couriers. In the second, Faye Wang, boyish server at a fast-food counter, develops a crush on Tony Leung and starts breaking into his apartment to redecorate it while he's out. The two stories intersect briefly, but the main thing is not the narrative but the mood: flip, funny, fatalistic and heartbreaking. I showed it on tape to a friend recently, and he started talking about what it must have been like to see early Godard films such as *Bande à part* on first release. Actually, it has a major (unacknowledged) debt to ultra-hip Japanese novelist Murakami Haruki, but the comparison with vintage Godard is about right. As you watch it, it feels as if Wong is seeing everything afresh, and reframing the concept of cinema while he's about it.

I saw other good things in Hong Kong too, including Yim Ho's *Tianguo Niezi* (*The Day the Sun Turned Cold*), in which a young man in north-east China plucks up the courage to tell the police that he thinks his mother killed his father ten years earlier, and the first cut of Stanley Kwan's *Red Rose, White Rose*, a masterly literary adaptation that does for the Shanghai bourgeoisie of the 40s what Martin Scorsese's *The Age of Innocence* did for Edith Wharton's New Yorkers. This torrent of interesting work begs an obvious question: why is Chinese cinema the most creative in the world at a time when its home audiences have lost interest? Circumstances may yet conspire to bring all this to an end, but for now there is no sign that Chinese film-makers are losing heart. To judge by the films I've seen this summer, neither should their audiences.



The time of the Red Guards: Jiang Wen's 'In the Heat of the Sun'



Comic fable: Zhou Xiaowen's 'Ermo'

'Forrest Gump' is an extravagant hit in the US. What does its success tell us about Bill Clinton's isolationist country? By Martin Walker

MAKING SACCHARINE TASTE SOUR

● Every once in a while, when Hollywood is luckier or more profound than it usually pretends, a film surges beyond the sealed enclave of the cinema into the wider national discourse, to become a parable of the American condition. Most recently, Oliver Stone's *JFK* provoked a renewed debate about the Kennedy assassination and modern America's uneasy definitions of fact and fiction, parody and polemic. Other films to have achieved this status include *Birth of a Nation*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, *Gone with the Wind*, *The Godfather* and *ET*.

And now *Forrest Gump*, the stupid superstar who has half America (including Bill Clinton) citing his mother's nostrum, "stupid is as stupid does". Played with wooden precision and a beguiling drawl by Tom Hanks, *Forrest Gump* is the Holy Fool of fairy tales. Dumb enough to exist, innocent enough to survive, blessed enough to prosper, Gump is also stubbornly, dutifully honourable enough to redeem all the victims of his wretched time. Indeed, recent American history would have been pretty grim without *Forrest Gump* to fix things. As a crippled boy in his mother's boarding house, his leg callipers force him into a jerky gait which inspires one lodger, the young Elvis Presley, into the wiggle which made him famous. John Lennon is moved to write 'Imagine' after chatting with Forrest on a TV talk-show. When Governor George Wallace stands in the schoolhouse door to stop blacks from being integrated into Alabama schools, young Forrest chases after the soldiers to give a black girl the schoolbook she had dropped.

Forrest's schoolmates are Southern redneck bullies, but as they chase him on their bikes, he miraculously discovers that he can run, his feet pounding so hard that the callipers explode from his legs and he gallops his way into a football scholarship. That leads him to the All-American football team, which takes him to the White House, where the sudden need to pee in the Oval Office makes him the first to discover that a lovingly signed portrait of Marilyn Monroe holds pride of place in President Kennedy's private lavatory.

Then comes Vietnam, where Forrest never seems to see the locals, nor indeed the point –

"Everybody was looking for some guy called Charlie". But Forrest becomes a hero when he rescues all of his wounded buddies from a Viet-Cong ambush, even though he himself has been shot in the bum. He wins a Congressional Medal of Honor, which takes him back to the White House for the presentation. This time President Johnson does the honours, and asks to see Forrest's wound. Forrest drops his pants and obliges, in another of the extremely skilful uses of computerised film techniques to insert Hanks into archive footage.

His service to America is not over. In his Veterans Hospital, Forrest learns to play ping-pong and becomes the star of the US team which broke through the bamboo curtain to play table-tennis against the Chinese. At this point, the film and Winston Groom's book diverge. The book has Forrest saving Chairman Mao from drowning. The film ignores this. The book also has Forrest sent into space with an ape, crashing in New Guinea, where he is held captive for four years by a chess-playing cannibal who has studied at Yale. This too is gone from the film. All historical references here are American, maintaining the extraordinarily introspective, isolationist self-obsession which has resonated so deeply in the US this summer.

The trend is clear not only from *Forrest Gump*, but also from *Natural Born Killers*, the latest offering from Oliver Stone. It is an attempted satire on America's cultural dependencies on violence and the media, with all of Stone's raw drive and fervour. Stone has hitherto made his name as the self-appointed filmic historian of



'Forrest Gump': the baby-boomers' guide to their own youth

that same US imperialist era that *Forrest Gump* covers so blandly. And much of the power of his work comes from his realisation that to understand the beasts gnawing away inside American vitals, one has to observe how America operated overseas. In *Salvador* and *Platoon*, and to a striking degree in *JFK*, Stone repeatedly stresses that modern America was defining itself through its failings in Central America, South-East Asia and Cuba. But *Heaven & Earth*, Stone's Vietnam-based movie released last year, was a commercial failure. The audiences have had it with Vietnam. His plunge back this year into the American self-obsession is a clue to something deeper moving through the culture.

It is partly to do with the end of the Cold War and the twilight of America's global mission, partly to do with President Clinton's blithe sidelining of foreign policy to concentrate on his grand agenda of domestic reform. But the strongest current is a generational one. As the baby-boomers (who include Clinton, Stone and *Forrest Gump*) pass through the decades and become parents, professors, senior managers and even president, they feel the need for some discrete but deliberate revisionism of their pasts. Bill Clinton did not inhale. Dan Quayle did not evade the draft. Lyndon Johnson's son-in-law, Senator Chuck Robb, may have enjoyed champagne and a back rub in a New York hotel room with Miss Virginia, but "I did not take part in the sexual revolution." Oliver Stone always loved America. Bill Clinton, who wrote to his draft board in 1969 of "loathing the military", hailed them on the D-Day beaches this summer: "We are the children of your sacrifice. We are the sons and daughters you saved from tyranny's reach."

The past is another country and the baby-boomers' travel guides are being briskly rewritten, nowhere more engagingly than in *Forrest Gump*. Vietnam becomes an occasion for the old virtues of John Wayne's Hollywood, fox-hole courage and loyalty to buddies. The counterculture of drugs and free love destroyed its participants, unless they could be redeemed by the intimate embrace of the great American family. Watergate was just a jolly caper. Everyone can get rich in America, even an alcoholic and legless cripple. Children make all lives whole. A cultural tradition that began with Thomas Wolfe's *You Can't Go Home* is turned on its head. The *Forrest Gump* generation of Americans must go home: indeed, as his ruined girlfriend discovers in her miserable cavalry through the counterculture, they should never have left. *Forrest Gump* is the history of the baby-boomers as candy-coated by Disneyworld.

And America has embraced this vision with extraordinary enthusiasm. *Forrest Gump* took \$100 million in less than three weeks, over \$200 million in just 50 days. It is well on the way to the \$250 million mark, which would mean that it accounted for 5 per cent of all box-office takings in the US for the year. It seems certain to exceed the \$260 million earned by *Jaws* to become the fifth-highest grossing film of all time. This commercial success is a consequence of the broader political debate the film has provoked. Conservative commentators such as the former presidential candidate Pat

Buchanan suggest that it proves that 'the Sixties' never really happened, or at least not in the way that Hollywood and Woodstock Two had mythologised.

"Is there some tiny cell of conservatism burrowing deep inside the Hollywood cultural elite?" pondered Buchanan. "For this film about the life of a crippled Alabama boy with an IQ of 75 is a morality play, where decency, honor and fidelity triumph over the values of Hollywood. It is, at core, a conservative film."

Liberals have countered that *Forrest Gump* attacks war, racism, male sexism, the sexual abuse of children and upholds the pride and decency of single mothers. In the *New York Times*, Frank Rich also found it to be a morality play, but one about America's constant hunger for lost innocence, even bought with a feeble mind. Rich argues that Americans respond to Gump's pilgrim's progress, his moral journey towards a decent placidity, because they yearn for another poor Southern boy at the mercy of a wicked world – Bill Clinton – to chart the same course for them all.

Perhaps the best liberal defence was crafted by the conservative commentator Charles Moore, who condemned Buchanan for failing to realise that "the movie reeks of political correctness. That Buchanan didn't notice it is a commentary on how much PC has become part of the normal background noise of our lives," Moore continues. "Let me count the ways:

"It opens with a spurious scene showing hooded (Ku Klux) Klansmen...

"We have a protective, nurturing mother – who has been deserted by her no-good husband.

"The mother is subjected to sexual harassment.

"Typical Southern rednecks display the Confederate Battle Flag in a derogatory manner.

"Jenny (Forrest's love in the film) leads a life of shame – but the enlightened know it was only because she was sexually molested by her alcoholic, sharecropper father.

"Jenny's boyfriend hits her – but it is only one more example of the abusive, oppressive males who seem to dominate her life.

"Forrest was the best in his platoon at basic training because he had the lowest IQ – the dumber you are, the better you will fit into the military.

"There are no good, healthy white males in Gump's life. All sympathy and understanding comes from women... *Forrest Gump* is typical Hollywood propaganda, with excellent stealth PC packaging."

The film has become a palimpsest, on which audiences may inscribe whatever message they choose. This was quite deliberate. Director Robert Zemeckis (who also made *Back to the Future* and *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*) said that he intended "to present this generation without commenting on it... Because of Forrest's blankness, everybody could sort of bring their own bottle to the party."

This involves some cheating. Freshly draped with his Medal of Honor and in uniform, Forrest stumbles from the White House into an anti-war rally, where he blunders his way on to the stage. An infuriated cop pulls the wires for



The beguiling Tom Hanks as the stupid Forrest Gump

the sound system and the loudspeakers are mute until Forrest concludes "and that is all I have to say about Vietnam".

So we never know. But before we can complain, or unsuspend disbelief, comes a cry from the crowd of "Forrest". And there is little Jenny, the only girl who would give Forrest a seat on the school bus, his childhood sweetheart who had turned her back on Alabama in a bid to become another Joan Baez. A lost flower child of the counterculture, abused by men and reduced to singing 'Where Have All the Flowers Gone?' in a strip-joint, she leaps into the Reflecting Pool by the US Capitol to be joined in a watery embrace by Forrest. And even the ranks of the pot-smoking, anti-war counterculture can scarce forbear to cheer. They even smile, as reflexive in their response to a classic moment of Hollywood cliché as their older selves reliving it all in the cinema.

Not that Jenny stays. But she comes back from time to time, abandoning the trail of cocaine and tears for the safe and predictable security of that Alabama home in Forrest's arms. Once she even manages to bed her Forrest, in a scene achieved with great prurience, and then heads off again and catches Aids. But not before she has given birth to young Forrest. She comes home to die, in the same bed as Forrest's loving mother. Life goes on, and so does the dynasty of Gump.

This is a film which would make saccharine taste sour. It goes beyond the further shores of the glutinous, with just enough historical wit to dampen the nausea. On his third trip to the White House, after his table-tennis triumph in China, Forrest asks President Nixon if he can recommend a decent hotel. Once installed, a sleepless Forrest notices flashing torches in another room and calls security, to catch the Watergate burglars.

Ping-pong nets Forrest \$30,000 in commercial endorsements. (Is this a great country or what?) He uses the money to fulfil his pledge to Bubba, his dead Vietnam buddy, a young black man from the Gulf coast who knows everything there is to know about shrimping. Forrest was to be first mate to Bubba's skipper (PC

again), so he buys a boat and catches no shrimp until a hurricane wipes out all the rival shrimpers, and allows Forrest to make a fortune. Then he invests in what he thinks is a small fruit company called Apple – computers, of course – and gains enough to continue living in the family's old Alabama home (which would have done credit to *Gone with the Wind*) and to enable Bubba's mother to hire a white cook.

And if Forrest cannot save Jenny, he saves his old Vietnam lieutenant, first from the Viet-Cong ambush and then from a doom of legless, alcoholic despair. Lieutenant Dan becomes the first mate on the shrimping boat and a business genius who expands the company into a fleet of ships and then a seafood conglomerate empire. And, of course, he learns to walk on artificial legs, gets engaged to a pleasant-faced Vietnamese girl, and becomes best man at Forrest's deathbed wedding to Jenny.

The novel on which the film is based was published eight years ago and sold a respectable but not best-selling 30,000 copies. The paperback, republished for the film, has now sold 1.5 million, and a new collection of aphorisms, *Gumpisms*, has just sold out its first 150,000 copies. Samples: "If you don't know where you are goin', you will probably not wind up there... Do not wear T-shirts which advertise somebody else's products... Nobody ever got into trouble by keeping his mouth shut."

At 140 minutes, *Forrest Gump* is a long film, at times a very slow one. Its significance lies less in its glib straddle of politics than in its eerily precise exploitation of the endless pliability of the American past. It is a sum of newsreels rewound and made blandly, briskly suitable for the age of 'Headline News', seconds of archive footage here and brief soundbites there. Civil rights and Vietnam and flower-power and Watergate reel past, with soundtrack triggers of dozens of rock hits played just long enough to tickle the memory but not enough to command it. (The soundtrack album was number two on the CD charts this week.)

For the baby-boomer generation, increasingly uneasy at the performance of the first of its number in the White House, it makes for a comforting, because comfortably lobotomised, trip down memory lane with a happy ending in store. *Forrest Gump* is *The Big Chill* with a comfort blanket, Hollywood's disturbing version of that totalitarian ability to sanitise the past which George Orwell identified as the deepest peril to truth. The message of *Forrest Gump* is simple: there was nothing to the tumults of America's last 40 years that could not be made tolerable with a good heart, an IQ of 75, a mother's homespun values, and surviving the deaths of assorted loved ones.

Beyond America's self-indulgent shores, it may not seem quite as easy. But that is the point. The Clinton era is about America taking a break from the rest of the messy world its policies did so much to shape. *Forrest Gump* is the cultural emblem of that isolationist mood. The myth of the Ugly American is giving way to the Stupid one, who believes that everything works out fine if you just stay home.

'Forrest Gump' opens on 7 October and is reviewed on page 41 of this issue

LINDSAY ANDERSON UNREQUITTED LOVER

BY GAVIN
LAMBERT

● The piece that follows overleaf was written early in 1993, after seeing what turned out to be Lindsay Anderson's last film, his contribution to the television series *The Director's Place*. Its publication in *Sight and Sound* was delayed to coincide with the film's airing on television, which has only just occurred – almost three weeks after Lindsay's death.

This prologue to my first impressions was written after I looked at one of his earlier films again on the VCR. I chose *If...* because of its strong personal associations. It was shot mainly on location at Cheltenham College, the school which hastened our development as 'rebels', although the only machine-guns we had were in our minds.

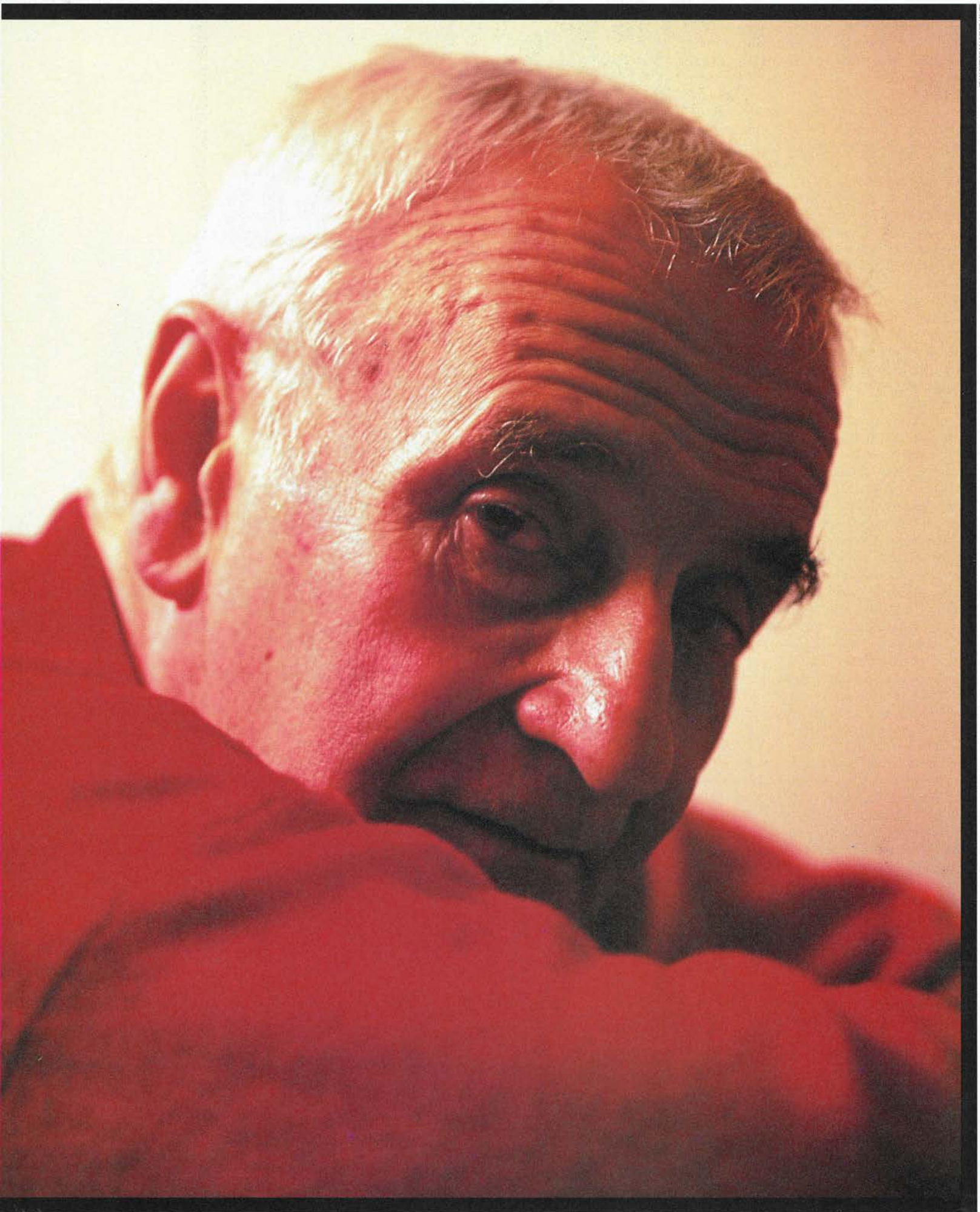
Twenty-six years after it was made, *If...* strikes me as an extraordinarily romantic work. Like Hitchcock (it's their only point of resemblance), Lindsay played out his erotic fantasies on the screen, not in life. In *This Sporting Life*, his first feature, there's a powerful but indirect response to the physicality of the footballer and his world, the tussles on the field and the emotional steam of the locker room. *If...* is more openly and highly charged, with its naked adolescents in the shower, dialogue loaded with sexual interplay, and – one of the most purely lyrical homoerotic scenes in any movie – the sequence in subliminal slow motion of the pretty junior schoolboy watching the handsome senior exercising in the gymnasium. And from his first appearance, black scarf masking his face below the eyes, black hat on his head, body wrapped in a loose black overcoat like a cape, there's a halo of glamour around Malcolm McDowell's Mick Travers, the sardonic and beautiful rebel hero.

Lindsay came to be the Great Outsider of British films, and yet he remained basically a romantic. But a romantic at war with reality as he perceived it. The clash is apparent in his early documentaries, the savage eye turned on popular pleasures at a funfair in *O Dreamland*, the deep empathy with

Covent Garden workers conveyed by *Every Day Except Christmas*. Over the years this tension became more extreme, as the hoped-for rebellion in *If...* never happened, and as he wrote in his last letter to me, "things never really change in England". And so the unrequited lover took on the mask of satirist.

As Lindsay found his promised land increasingly unpromising, he showed McDowell's Mick Travers developing from cocky to desperate opportunist in *O Lucky Man!* and *Britannia Hospital*. Youth and passion disappeared in a world of lost causes, and the humour in these films grew darker, the satire more caustic. After *Britannia Hospital*, Lindsay himself acquired the image of the cantankerous loner. The film took a terrible beating at the time, partly because its release coincided with the Falklands War, and failed to march to the beat of Thatcher's patriotic drum. (No wonder there were lines around the block in Buenos Aires.) But what almost every critic failed to see was that like Lindsay himself, it was wounded as well as wounding.

"Cruel" became the buzzword for Buñuel, "bitter" the conditioned reflex to Lindsay. The Spaniard was driven to exile from his own country, the Britisher found himself an exile at home. The genuine satirist has always been a rare and endangered species, and not just because he makes a lot of people angry. His satire is a defence against pain, and he scolds because he loves. In his last film, Lindsay was as unsparing with himself as with the society he targeted. There's self-mockery in his self-portrait, he knows the role he's expected to play, but the most lasting impression is of something wonderfully benign behind the ritual severity, like the sense of nostalgia and regret behind his account of Mick Travers' progress. "A style is an attitude. An attitude is a style," he once wrote. This director's world lives because he followed his own commandment to the end.
Born Bangalore, India, 17 April 1923;
died France, 30 August 1994



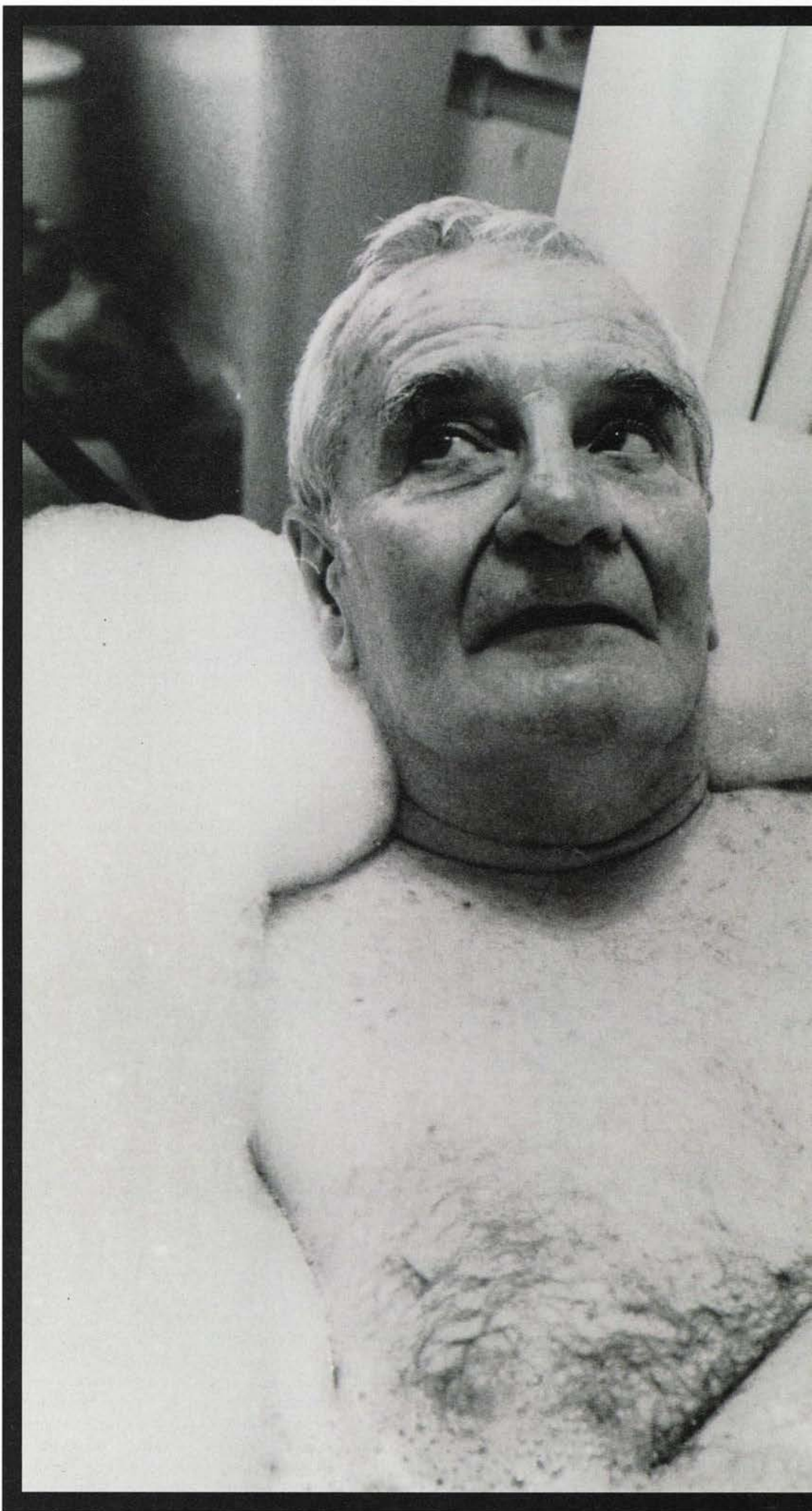
This article, I had better start by saying, will not be an 'objective' review of *Is That All There Is?*, but as personal as the film Lindsay Anderson has made. An old friend, he asked me to write about it – provided, of course, that I liked it – because he said he “couldn't think of anyone else who would fully understand what I've tried to express”. And as I like the film very much, I shall try to express here how it affected me, the delayed echo I hear as I write.

In 1971 a soon-to-be-defunct American magazine, *Cinema*, published a monograph by Lindsay on John Ford – something I had originally commissioned, when I was editor of *Sight and Sound*, as the first of a projected series on film directors, delayed and then cancelled owing to lack of funds. In the introduction that *Cinema* asked me to write, I noted – from the vantage point of a California expatriate – that Lindsay had always been far more 'British' than myself: “He is impatient and sometimes furious, but remains deeply attached. He will always live there, I guess, because like Ford he loves the idea of solid, far-reaching roots, and like Ford he is fundamentally a secret person. Exile involves self-exposure...”

Well. Lindsay still lives in Britain, of course, but he's a kind of exile anyway. And *Is That All There Is?* tells me first of all, with a degree of self-exposure new in his work, how he feels about it. The film was commissioned by BBC Scotland as part of a series called *The Director's Place*; there were no guidelines, just a request for a 50-minute account of how he lived and worked. At first, having no idea what was expected of him, he felt disconcerted. But it was finally liberating. The film creates its own unexpected form, a kind of controlled free association. One episode follows another, seemingly isolated, but in fact linked by a subtext.

After an opening shot of a dour, turn-of-the-century London block of flats comes the first of several intertitles in the style of silent movies, used (as in *O Lucky Man!*) to punctuate scenes: “Every Day”. The next shot shows Lindsay waking up in bed, switching on his bedside radio and being subjected to the first of various media bombardments that will provide more violent punctuation – salvos of bad news alternating with explosive images. “Every Day” continues with the director swallowing a few prescription pills, then lying almost entombed in a bubble bath as he gazes up at the posters of his films that decorate the bathroom walls. He doesn't let on what he's thinking, his eyes are veiled, enigmatic, almost saurian, but the television in the living room has supplied an implicit comment in the form of a peculiarly brutal and disgusting clip from *Lethal Weapon 3*. This is (almost) all there is now.

Preceded by an actual disaster image from television, of the floods in Pakistan, the director ventures into the street – ‘ventures’ because his deliberate but wary pace suggests someone who expects the territory to be hostile. But here, as he sets out on a round of local chores – at the dry cleaners, the wine shop, the supermarket – he is beginning to ‘play’ himself, very much a ‘character’, ironic and a bit crusty, in his exchanges with the shop people. This is



In the end: Lindsay Anderson in 'Is That All There Is?', his autobiographical film for television, left



Bursting out: Malcolm McDowell as Mick Travers in Lindsay Anderson's 'If...', top, and Richard Harris in 'This Sporting Life', above

clearly a ritual: they expect it, Lindsay enjoys it, and there's an affectionately programmed, Beckett-like futility to the whole thing. As a later hospital visit for a heartbeat check-up suggests, age has made physical inroads, but his spiritual eyesight remains as sharp as ever.

Another intertitle announces "Visitors", and as a succession of friends and colleagues – the writers Bernard Kops and David Sherwin, a couple of actors, a young television producer – drop by the flat, it becomes clear that the centre of life is the kitchen. As well as more posters on the walls, there are a John Wayne collage and a newspaper photograph of the Queen Mother, smiling with the same terrible sweetness as the actress who impersonated her in *Britannia Hospital*. Around the table, improvised conversations circle the same topics: the unpromising state of the world and the rejection of film projects. Although downbeat, the tone is oddly cheerful. When Lindsay reads aloud to Sherwin various letters declining their latest script, it is less to commiserate than to mock the pomposity and/or stupidity in the responses.

One eruption occurs, however – not from the media, though as startling as a previous television image of an exploding washer-dryer. Lindsay's nephew Sandy leans back too far in his chair and overbalances. When the others laugh, the nephew advances on his uncle in an outburst of manic rage and starts pouring the contents of a wine bottle over his head.

Three brief sequences show the director at work. With designer Jocelyn Herbert and playwright David Storey he talks about the set for his production of *Stages* at the National Theatre; with BBC producer Andrew Eaton he discusses *About John Ford*, the documentary he recently wrote and narrated – but the talk is of Ford, not himself; and while dictating a biographical note for the *Stages* programme, he breaks off to comment that he has "not a bad record" in the theatre. In each case the tone is matter-of-fact, almost throwaway, and refreshingly free of any attempt to 'explain' his work or to analyse 'the creative process'.

A TV news tidbit, about the Queen under fire for her wealth, kicks off an engaging scene with Lindsay's cleaning lady, who sings 'Always Look on the Bright Side', then involves him in an absurdly complicated argument about bus versus Underground travel in London. A celebration of the 'ordinary', and of the salt of the earth, its mood connects with some of his early documentaries, particularly *Every Day Except Christmas* – just as the epiphany that closes the film echoes the finales of *If...* and *O Lucky Man!*

The riverboat *Connaught* moves along the Thames, the crowd on board invited by the director to a memorial ceremony for two actresses, Rachel Roberts and Jill Bennett, who were close friends of himself and of each other. Among those present we glimpse other friends and colleagues: Anthony Page, David Storey, David Sherwin, Betsy Blair, Jocelyn Herbert. This being a Lindsay Anderson film, the atmosphere is anti-funereal, a time to demonstrate enduring affection for the lost rather than to mourn the loss itself. Alan Price, at an electric piano, sings *Is That All There Is?*, the song made

famous by Peggy Lee and just as effective in his own, more openly protesting style. Then ashes and flowers are scattered over the water, with two brief flashbacks intercut – to Jill in a delicious moment from Lindsay's satirical TV film based on Alan Bennett's *The Old Crowd*, and of Rachel in a sombre mood in *This Sporting Life*. And the ship sails on...

This sequence is extraordinarily moving – as a salute to two passionately vulnerable, talented and quirky outsiders who fought a losing battle with life. And it's no coincidence, of course, that Lindsay appreciated them so deeply. He is still fighting the outsider's battle himself – which is what *Is That All There Is?* seems to me, finally, to be about.

The world it creates, and the self-portrait of the director in that world, has an unmistakable aura of alone-ness. But it avoids self-pity. Defiance is the keynote, mellower than in *If...* or *Britannia Hospital*, but no less stubborn. The rebellion may have failed, and those schoolboys on the roof of college given way to the yuppie generation, but Lindsay still leads an opposition party of one. And the price he has paid for remaining faithful to his pungently original, shit-kicking talent is to have made only six feature films in 30 years. Most British directors of his generation have made at least twice that number, and while less may be more in Lindsay's case, the record seems only marginally less frustrating for that. So does the fact that he has done notable work in the theatre; films have always been his ruling passion. From time to time, over the years, I've heard the comment, "Lindsay doesn't make it easy for himself." This, of course, is only a way of asking why he doesn't compromise, and overlooks a basic point. If compromise were in his nature, Lindsay would never have made the films he has succeeded in making.

Like Ford, his favourite director, Lindsay is part rebel and part traditionalist. But where Ford's lack of sympathy with contemporary life led him to a poetic idealisation of the past, Lindsay's distaste for an age of moral shabbiness and closed hearts has fired him to attack it directly. Shock tactics have always been his preferred weapon: the incongruous or violent imagery that suddenly detonates in the middle of scenes of "Every Day", the shots of starving Somalian children interrupting a vista of supermarket plenty. And very occasionally there's the shock of nostalgia, like the still photograph that ends this film, a youthful Lindsay who stands waving from seaside rocks. It comes as a reminder of the long road travelled, from a time when the view was more open and encouraging than it is today.

But the last delayed echo I hear is of unrequited love, for a country of the mind, the better place that he would like England to be – and that in the 60s optimism of *If...* he thought it might become. Slow dissolve, and it turned into *Britannia Hospital*. Now, even if he asks *Is That All There Is?*, he carries on regardless, finding moments of comfort and solidarity where he can, and for the rest of the time, keeping his finger on the trigger.

Is That All There Is? was shown on 17 September. A full appreciation will be published in due course

A FILM DIARY BY LARRY GROSS

THE SCREENWRITER AND

GERONIMO

● One day in 1988 I visited Walter Hill at Carolco, where he was finishing *Johnny Handsome*. Snooping around his desk, I picked up a script the company had bought from John Milius about the Indian war chief, Geronimo. Walter expressed his interest in doing the film, but was pessimistic about the chances of it ever happening. Westerns, especially ones centred on Indians, were out of fashion.

Four years later, Walter and his producer Neil Canton screened another just-finished film for me, *Trespass*. At lunch, Walter mentioned his rewrite of *Geronimo*, which, in the post-*Dances with Wolves* world, was in active development at Columbia Pictures. Timidly, I asked to look at it and proposed some changes. We made a deal with Columbia and I spent the next six or eight months rewriting the script with Walter. By the beginning of 1993, Wes Studi had been signed to play Geronimo, after impressing Walter as the villainous Magua in Michael Mann's *The Last of the Mohicans*. To play the cavalry officer (Gatewood) who befriended and ultimately captured Geronimo, Walter had chosen Jason Patric, a young actor everyone in Hollywood believes in, but who does few pictures and has never had a hit. Still, in the spring of 1993, with the script mainly finished and the two principal parts cast, Columbia found ways of not letting Walter start the picture. Two major roles remained to be cast – one, General George Crook, who went down in history as “the general who couldn't catch Geronimo”; the other the legendary scout and Indian fighter Charlie Sieber.

28 March 1993 I'm flying to London to work with Andrei Konchalovsky on rewrites of a project called *The Royal Way* – an adaptation of a novel by André Malraux. I like the project and Konchalovsky a lot, but as I arrive in London a part of me is focused on events back in LA. Walter Hill is trying to cast *Geronimo* and get Columbia to let him start the picture. We have been working on the script for a year, and all through that time Columbia has insisted on wanting to do it. But there is endless talk about the casting and the script – and you can never tell whether it's all just smoke to keep from having to start.

6 April Walter Hill is flying from LA to Robert Duvall's ranch to offer him the part of Sieber. My heart soars like a hawk. All writers fantasise about having their dialogue transformed by the likes of Duvall.

9 April Duvall commits to *Geronimo*. Walter sounds excited, excitement mixed with fear. In my London hotel room, I'm slightly off my rocker with hope. Return to LA tomorrow.

17 April At the end of the afternoon, more good news: Gene Hackman is to play General Crook. I say to myself, “Now we have Hackman and Duvall, there's no way they won't let us make the movie,” but another voice reminds me this is not necessarily true. We're still a \$40 million Western with Jason Patric and a man named Wes Studi in the lead roles. From the studio's standpoint, Hackman and Duvall are beautiful wallpaper.

Many years ago I tried to develop a script with Dustin Hoffman. The constant reference points in his conversations about acting were the two best friends he had made in the theatre in New York in the late 50s – Gene Hackman and Robert Duvall. They were on screen together momentarily in *The Conversation*, but at no other time, and there they didn't have real scenes to play. Hackman and Duvall on screen at the same time is a little like mixing with royalty. Of course the downside is that if nothing special comes of it, it's all on your head.

22 April Yesterday Jason Patric and I had our second long drink at the bar of the Four Seasons Hotel, discussing the state of *Geronimo*. He, in good 90s actor mode, stuck to club soda. I continue to like Jason. He has a basic concern that it's impossible not to sympathise with: “Let me have something memorable to say opposite Duvall and Hackman, give me ways to make my scenes with them better. Don't let me disappear.” You can write this off as actor insecurity, but in fact it's completely correct. Movies need balance. Jason's Gatewood is in many ways the moral centre of the drama and he has to be able to stand up to these formidable supporting players. If the audience is focused on them and not on him, we've failed to do our job.

25 April Walter and the cast and crew have been in Utah preparing to shoot for several weeks, yet despite all this time and effort, the film has still not received its green light. No one thinks we won't get it, but there is considerable anxiety. I've been summoned to work on a last polish on the script with Walter and Neil Canton.

It's a long hike from LA to the location in Moab. You have to fly into Provo or some airstrip in Colorado and then drive for four

hours. The red rock of Utah commands the eye. Of course, the events we're filming took place many miles to the south, in what is now Arizona and New Mexico. But once you see these stunning vistas, their reality takes over.

Similarly with Wes Studi as Geronimo. I met him tonight, in the bar where the cast and crew hang out in off-hours. He's a gentle man who has nothing obvious in common with the creature who took scalps so enthusiastically in *The Last of the Mohicans*, but I've seen him in costume as Geronimo with prosthetic make-up to age and rough up his appearance, and despite his being 20 years too young for the part, you start to think of Geronimo as this man. Like the landscape, he has authority.

27 April I have glints of scary optimism about how *Geronimo* might turn out (optimism has to be scary on a film of this size, because it might be a symptom of massive self-delusion). But more than any movie Walter has done in the 11 years I've known him, and certainly more than on our three previous films together, he not only knows exactly how to make this film, but is including far more of himself – his heart and soul and his convictions about life, so to speak. And almost as important as this, I think his inclinations and dispositions match the story and the material. His instincts will serve him. Walter deeply loves these nineteenth-century people in a way I'm not sure he ever loves his modern characters. And his aesthetic commitments to reticence and suggestion in characterisation is truer to these people than in some other cases.

29 April Today we heard reactions to the new polish of the script from Jason, from Kevin Jones – Columbia's point man on the movie – and from several other interested parties. They like what we gave them, with fewer caveats than I expected. All through this process, I have waited fearfully for the studio to want some ludicrous happy ending where Geronimo wins, or some ludicrous caricaturing of the cavalry so we'll have trivial rooting for the Indians, or a removal of all indications of Geronimo's capacity for cruelty. The surprising and, to me, mysterious truth is that the studio has not once asked to go in an overtly stupid direction. It helps that our producer is a brother of the studio head, but he could equally be used as the defender of bad ideas and they've never asked



The landscape of authority: Wes Studi as the Apache leader in Walter Hill's 'Geronimo'

him to play that part. I can truthfully say that we've had fewer bad suggestions from the studio on this film than on any I've worked on. I could credit this to Kevin Jones' considerable intelligence, but I've also seen Kevin carry inane water on other projects when he was told to. The truth is that someone at the top has thrown up their hands and conceded that the movie can never be good and be 'easily' commercial, and that the less risky and more commercial option is to make it as good as we can.

30 April We have a green light. Hallelujah. In the afternoon visited Fort San Carlos and then rode out to look at other locations.

Walter Hill is the best person I know at managing to be a power player in the everyday grind of making a film. Michael Mann once described him to me with a phrase whose accuracy everyone who knows Walter would acknowledge: a straight shooter. An enormous number of people work together on a film and that sometimes seems like an enormous vari-

ety of provocations for making the film mediocre, turning what you work on into something you can explain equally easily to all your collaborators. The glamorous, much admired 'genius' of a director lies in his or her ability to use this collectivity or to deny or forget it at key moments. In this, the director is a political creature in a Platonic or Machiavellian sense, at once exploiter, liberator, limiter and enabler of the group, both its servant and its master. Walter gets this through his fingertips.

1 May Walter and I discuss a favourite topic – the endless mysteries of casting, though some mistakes are not mysterious and would, you might think, be avoidable. I remarked that casting soft, rural, even slightly bovine Debra Winger – a consummate naturalistic lower-middle-class type – as neurasthenic Kit Moresby in *The Sheltering Sky* (a part calling for a sexed-up Katharine Hepburn) was as dumb as, say, casting John Wayne to play Clarence Darrow. Walter laughed and started considering Wayne,

who is one of his all-time favourites in Ford or Hawks, but as Walter remarked about his limitations with dialogue, "I don't think you can even imagine Wayne playing a reporter."

Walter, Neil and the cast and crew have left Moab for the extreme desert locations near Provo. I'm heading back to L.A. A movie is a train whose speed and power, made up of money and collective desire, often crush precision, subtlety and grace. As of now, in the famous phrase of Hollywood lawyer Jake Bloom, "The train has sailed."

9 May Long phone discussion with Walter. The first week's work was spoiled, as far as schedule and efficiency go, by rain, sudden thunder showers and flash floods making the paths to locations impassable. You pay for the beauty of these remote places in unforeseeable ways. Such are the endless trade-offs of the process.

Walter has some leeriness about Jason Patric's proclivity for a lot of takes. There was a decision to hack some stuff out of the script for budgetary reasons – none of which I miss, except Mrs Gatewood. It might have enriched the film to have had a break from war, but I have to admit that we can live without it. Where Jason feels we're weak is in the final scenes that involve him being sent out to capture Geronimo, the last time. He's not wrong.

Watched a good video print of *Stagecoach* at a friend's. Admittedly, I'm highly vulnerable to this movie at the moment, but I'm still flabbergasted. It all goes by in around 92 minutes: Dickensian – even Shakespearean – richness of character and attitude but nevertheless managing to be a conventional commercial film of its era. There's a relentless visual inventiveness in telling a story and particularly in responding to landscape: the mastery is in the sense of space as drama. Ford is one of the few geniuses of the medium in this regard. The straightforwardness of his conceptions of life and people is no more limiting to his genius than it is to Shakespeare's. The economy with which so many different emotional states are conveyed, the extremes of rigidity, grandiloquence, fear, weakness, bravery, corruption. The film is humanly, astonishingly diverse – as Godard said of Bresson's *Au Hasard Balthazar*, "The world in an hour and a half." I spoke of seeing it to Walter, who said, "That's the right one to be thinking of, that's for sure."

12 May The closest thing to studio 'problems' has surfaced. Suddenly there's talk that we might not be politically correct enough in our handling of the Indians. I get the depressing feeling that Kevin Jones hopes we're making the Native American version of *Boyz n the Hood*. As an old sympathiser with the worldwide international communist movement, I find the implication that I'd work on a film unsympathetic to the Indians personally offensive. But I also have to remind Kevin that fairness to the Indian side of the story should not mean beautification. That's condescension. That's ahistorical. That's not what we're doing. Kevin is vainly searching, I know, for some bullet to make the movie more acceptable, more 'fun' for the audience. It's that old curse called 'rooting interest' – the studio's concern for the moral security of the audience as they chow ►

◀ down on their popcorn. But we're not telling the story of the spiritual Sioux, we're telling the story of the Apache; the Spartans, not the Athenians. Their art was war. That's the way things are. We're also having a huge fight because in the final scene on the mountain between Gatewood and Geronimo, a cross is shown sympathetically. Suddenly Kevin is afraid we're depicting Geronimo as converting to fundamentalist Christianity. This would offend both Native American politicians and fundamentalist Christians. I promised, as a dyed-in-the-wool atheist, that this would not be the impression of the scene as shot. I then reported the meeting to Walter. He told me to have my bags ready – I may be heading back to Moab.

16 May Spoke with Walter. His chief concern at the moment is getting along day-to-day with Jason Patric. Jason is full of worries. The good news is that they're never trivially self-serving – Jason always has at least part of his eye on the good of the movie. But having the star be unhappy never fails to complicate things. Also, the studio has some doubts about Jason, apparently: dourness, one-note-ness. Walter believes Jason will work and so do I – not that it matters. I believe he adds certain 'bent' moments, fringes to the character.

18 May Back in Moab. Walter, Neil and I spent the day creating a funeral sequence after the Apache scouts help defeat some Mexican soldiers [eventually cut from the film], with a fairly long oration by Gatewood, to which Jason contributed some good suggestions. Jason's judgment is essentially sound.

But grappling with Jason's angst and assessing the strengths and weaknesses of his acting method is Walter's biggest 'problem' on the movie – and also, of course, his richest creative opportunity. Jason's potential is so enormous that it is frustrating not to have full, unstopped access to it. The name we can't help but invoke in comparison is Brando. The footage I saw of Jason being tough with the sheriff and his posse was highly encouraging, the best I've seen so far. The Southern accent raises hackles for a second and then you accept it – or I'm fooling myself, but I don't think so. Jason's gentleness in the role is intriguing. You haven't seen this character before. There is a fair amount of good acting in the world, but little good acting is original.

I'm headed back to LA with a paradox. Walter Hill, in some ways a political conservative and always sympathetic to Hollywood's conservative aesthetic programme, is at this moment of Hollywood's relentless march to the right making his most avowedly socially critical film, a film implicitly critical of all previous depictions of white/Native American relations. Of course, he would say he's being as critical of old-fashioned Hollywood liberalism as he is of old-fashioned Hollywood racism. Still, his timing couldn't be more odd.

24 May In Moab I made a terrifying discovery: *Geronimo* could be a very good film, even an important one. This immediately provoked disturbance and worry. Once before with Walter, with *Streets of Fire*, there was a chance of something great, but early, fundamental disappointment with key personnel (in that case the star,

The studio has some doubts about Jason: dourness, one-note-ness. Walter believes Jason will work and so do I – not that it matters



Cavalry triumph: Jason Patric, who captures Geronimo

Michael Paré) steered all of us to face the chance that it might not turn out that way.

But here I am in Moab, in a vast canyon ringed by magnificent walls of rock, standing in broiling heat next to Walter and the camera crew, and Gatewood's cavalry detail is travelling towards the camera. And I know that Jason Patric is demanding of himself that he give more than the conventional hero performance, and I contemplate the possible chemistry between Hackman and Duvall and Wes, and suddenly the magnitude of it all – the situation, and the protagonists in our story – dawns on me in a way that never had in the previous year of working on the script. All movies change when you shoot them. Some of them diminish, but this one, as soon as you place it in its physical visual setting, expands phenomenally. It is immediately about history, about race, about the fundamental visual symbols of the nation. Now I realise that the number of creative questions to be juggled smartly is immense and that there are innumerable ways to fail – the potential for failure to live up to what we're dealing with is *everywhere*. Indeed, the unusually real chance of producing a great film makes the likelihood of failure more concrete. It's as if we're climbing the highest and coldest of mountains – we're well trained and experienced, but there is still the maximum number of opportunities to slip and fall.

29 June Chat with Walter by phone. He describes his pleasure and satisfaction at working with Gene Hackman. Directors' reports of Hackman are remarkably consistent – they all love him: his self-possession and discipline and lack of irrelevant histrionics. On the business front, Columbia has made *Geronimo* into a Christmas picture, probable release date 10 December. *Wolf*, the Jack Nicholson/Mike Nichols movie, is taking longer to finish than anticipated and can't be the Christmas movie they hoped for. It's good in that it means they'll spend some of *Wolf*'s budget advertising our film; not so good in that there will be a drastically curtailed post-production period.

10 July Walter called from Moab. He was optimistic about a reel of cut film he'd seen and expects to be back in LA at the end of next week. He said some scenes need reworking: the 'new' idea is that Sieber die in the shoot-out with the bounty hunters (Glanton and the Tex-

ans are Walter's homage to – or lift from, if you prefer – Cormac McCarthy's novel *Blood Meridian*, a book he holds in high esteem). The other idea that appears to be evolving is that Crook's big farewell scene, which was always written to be played with Gatewood, is to be played between Crook and Sieber. Walter and I exchanged passes at these scenes by fax.

19 July Went to the Columbia lot. Saw Hackman as General Crook bidding farewell to his old friend and scout Charlie Sieber, played by Duvall. In the way this scene was written, I wasn't able to get everything into it that I wanted. It's done with the reticence characteristic of Walter, but as elsewhere in the movie, what is too reticent for other kinds of stories is probably historically legitimate here. Also, the confrontation I perhaps want out of this scene will come in the final scene between Gatewood and General Miles.

20 July Met with Kevin Jones and talked about how Columbia plans to sell the movie. He says people won't want to be told they're seeing a history lesson. A lot of fumphing about high-brow 'high road' messages to consumers and whether that ever works.

Go over to the set and watch Walter shooting the dance scene, quite cut down from what it was. Walter caroms around the big camera rig, arms a-swinging, burlesquing the cautious period dance forms. I can remember him doing the same routine during the musical numbers for *48 Hrs.* 11 years ago. He learned explicitly from Ford, "You have to put songs and musical numbers into these things", and I don't think there has been a single one of his films without a musical performance. And of course *The Warriors* and *Streets of Fire* are virtually musicals. Would anyone be prepared for the high esteem Walter holds Minnelli in? That's the aesthete side of him he enjoys denying.

25 July Met with Jason and Walter at a lunch place in Brentwood, where we talked about how to structure the cantina shoot-out. What Walter and I respond to in talking with Jason about the scene is that while he's as self-absorbed as any would-be movie star, he's also genuinely interested in coming up with a good bit of business for the other actors. He believes that the stronger the other actors, the better off he is – which of course is true. Jason has a generous spirit. Other topics arose: Walter is concerned, rightly, that the wrong kind of public relations campaign might be set in motion by some political lobby because of the movie's depiction of Indians. The Apaches are highly violent in the film and that may not be in some political interests.

1 August On this final day of shooting, Robert Duvall dies on the cantina floor. He improvises his own dying words and it's what every writer hopes will happen – he makes the scene better. He does it in two takes and when Walter tells him that they have it, he exults at how quick he is. As he is dismissed, the crew applauds.

On wrap day you feel the strange poignancy of watching 50 men and women who've worn the weighty halter of the movie on their shoulders remove it and return half-dazed to the so-called real world. On the simplest level, a community abruptly dissolves, but it's more

mysterious than that. Walter terms it a "Borge-sian" experience, an enigmatic second world that has become so real but now evaporates. Costumes and sets disappear, and also patterns, rhythms, concerns, relationships.

2 August Hiked over to Walter's house and watched a more than four-hour long rough assembly of *Geronimo* on a big advent screen. Came home and told my wife that today she had reasons to be proud that she was married to me; called my mother and said that this would be the finished film I would seriously regret my father was not alive to see.

Geronimo is classical cinema in a powerful way untypical of American mainstream cinema of 1993. It is also Walter's pessimistic view of human nature. Violence, Nature and History. When I watch the finest moments, I feel it is a great lament, like the visions of biblical poets, like the Homeric images of the funeral pyres after Hector attacks the Greeks. This is Walter's Greek movie. But it is also important in its insistence on the implacable facts of race and territory. This is the only film I can think of in 1993 Hollywood (except perhaps *Schindler's List*, which I haven't yet seen) that alludes to the tragic events in Yugoslavia and the Middle East.

The first big surprise is how enjoyable Jason Patric is. He is a romantic presence, but without any conventional romantic acts to perform. This produces an uncanny effect – I'm so glad the studio made us cut out Mrs Gatewood. Jason's accent, and the rest of the detail of his performance, are what I always hoped they would be: original.

The next big component of the film's effect are the landscapes. Walter and cinematographer Lloyd Ahearn have come up with a succession of sweeping, evocative images that are the blood and bone of the film. The landscape establishes the timeless element behind the specific historical forces that are in conflict. And the landscape's beauty is harsh and cruel and forbidding in a way that enriches the meaning of the story. The Apache and the cavalry are locked in an implacable dispute, and this implacability is echoed by the landscape. *Geronimo's* is also a very great performance.

Now come the problems. There is the obvious drama of cutting an hour and a half out of

the film. There is the realm of human affairs the film doesn't touch – there's no sexuality in it at all. But the film's austerity is what lifts it 'beyond' itself in extraordinary ways. It is intelligent in a thoroughly cinematic way.

My reactions to what I'm seeing are complicated by the fact that the movie is emphatically not 'mine'. The screenwriter's role is almost always unclear, and nowhere more so than with Walter and me. Walter rewrites a great deal of what I write, but at the same time consults me far more than most writers would be consulted on what can only be termed 'pro-directorial' decisions. Now we'll be closely involved in making choices about the editing. I think the film is good, but I am too close to know. Yet I've smelled defeat before and I don't smell it here.

3 August All of us know that writing never succeeds as therapy. What we neglect to say is that we wish that it did. When people discuss what blocks them, they ought to mention the teasing offer of therapeutic release that writing never quite delivers. Yes, writers deal with their angst in their work, and sometimes a degree of adroitness in handling those issues is a kick, but in reality writing is mainly enjoyable as a temporary escape from one's problems, not an incisive dealing with them.

The rightness of *Geronimo* as subject matter for Walter lies not just in its seriousness as American history, but also in the way the importance of the themes elicits ambivalence in him at a primal level. Walter didn't go after the task of expressing his personal angst; he was interested in the story, and the story fed on divisions and complications in his own feelings. But the film also moves outside the limits of Walter's personal opinions, or stretches to include contradictions in his opinions. The love of the cavalry and the liberal intent of being 'fair to the Indians' fight to an extraordinary standstill in this movie, while the historical process sweeps over both sides in the conflict.

29 August Saw the two-and-a-half-hour cut of *Geronimo*. Some good news, some less. The Turkey Creek section is starting to work much better. Hackman and Duvall have been enhanced. But the movie still feels long. The reason for this is that it doesn't have melo-

dramatic suspense. You are not led forward by a mystery, by a problem that needs to be resolved. Expectation, suspense, 'development' are not what is happening in the film.

22 September Yesterday *Geronimo* was seen in the form that must be approved by the Columbia brass if it's to make the December date. Today Kevin Jones joined Walter, Neil Canton and me at lunch. Kevin confirmed that the brass would accept the film in this form. Walter gruffly said "They better". Kevin gave me a ride from the restaurant. As we were about to get into his car, he said, "I have one thing to say". And then, with a wave of his large hand against his forehead, he added one word: "Phew".

5 November Another *Geronimo* screening, for LA lead press. Here was an audience of 'real' people and I enjoyed the film more than I ever had. Ry Cooder's score, which I had had some early reservations about, was working in the final mix to a degree I was unprepared for. The novelty of the film's ascetic, disciplined way of arousing emotion continues to impress.

25 November Opening in three weeks, of course our teeth chatter. Walter made the best statement: "If it does lousy, I've been through that. If it does great, I've been through that too. I just wish I could go to sleep for three weeks and when they wake me up, it's all over."

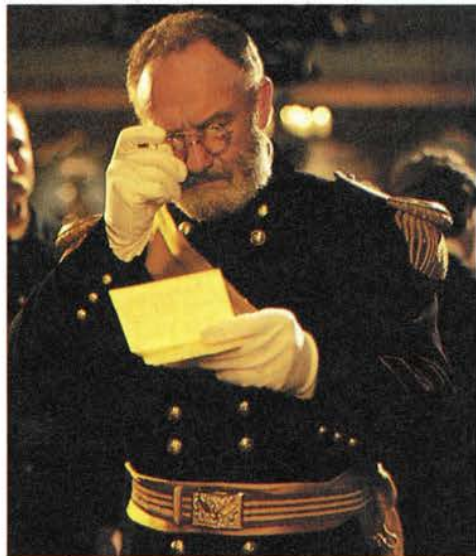
3 December *Geronimo* last night at the Academy. I hugged Wes Studi, who was having a good night. Jason Patric departed early. I think he was disappointed. And another cloud presented itself: the Hollywood players who came up to congratulate me were all puzzled by the film's seriousness. Not quite what they expect from Walter. This is the factor that can never be calculated in critical and public reaction to your work – what the context of their view of you was in the first place.

10 December Most reviews have come in now and are moderately to very favourable. Janet Maslin, arguably the most important critic in the country, slammed the film. Bille August, with whom I'm working, chuckles about her, how she hated *The Best Intentions*. "She's so mean," he says. Is she worse than that? Has she hurt the movie?

17 December The opening numbers are not good and I feel the dull roar of *Geronimo* not making money at the box office. The euphoria about *Schindler's List* is rising. Our holocaust film is too close to home for people to take notice. Try not to be petty. I hope Spielberg's film is every bit as great as everyone is saying.

Just before our film opened, Ted Turner aired his television movie biography of Geronimo to the biggest audience in the history of his channel. And people have come up to me and asked if the advertising they saw for the film was meant for the TV movie, and if that was what I'd worked on. If LA people are confused between the two pieces of work, imagine the confusion in Des Moines. "Turner stole your audience," one agent put it succinctly. But the science of what went wrong is a dark hole one can truly get lost in. Walter has strong interest from United Artists for his screenplay about Wild Bill Hickock. Everyone knows their marching orders. On to the next.

'Geronimo' opens in London only on 14 October



Songs of experience: Gene Hackman as General Crook, who never caught Geronimo, left; Robert Duvall as Charlie Sieber, right

“It is not difficult to make successful films which cater to the box office alone. The difficulty arises when purposeful films have to be shaped to succeed at the box office.” Guru Dutt
On the morning of Saturday 10 October 1964, Guru Dutt's friends broke down his bedroom door to discover that he had committed suicide. He had spent the previous evening with scriptwriter and director Abrar Alvi, one of his closest collaborators, who had read him the final scene of the film they were working on. It described the death of the heroine who, abandoned by her sister and everyone else, shuts herself away in a deranged state of loneliness. When asked by his friend what he thought, Dutt

replied, “You know, Abrar, I have a fear that some day I might go mad. Loneliness can be very oppressive.”

Guru Dutt joined the film industry at the age of 19 in 1944, and in the following 20 years acted in 17 films and directed nine. He was arguably India's finest director of song-pictures (musicals). Whether Dutt was turning his attention to high-society life as in ‘Mr and Mrs ‘55’, to middle-class prejudice in ‘Aar Paar’ (‘From One Side to the Other’) or to the decadent late nineteenth-century feudal order of Bengal as in ‘Sahib, Bibi Aur Ghulam’ (‘Master, Mistress and Servant’), he displayed a vivid creativity. He opened up new avenues in the use of camera movements and editing; expressionist lighting,

melodrama and mesmerising musical numbers are key ingredients of his cinema. He was the first Indian director to use songs to drive the narrative rather than simply as musical interludes.

But below the light surface gloss of some of Dutt's films lurks a brooding discontent with the status quo. His greatest success was ‘Pyaasa’ (Eternal Thirst), the story of an unsuccessful poet, played by Dutt himself, and his search for love and fame. ‘Kaagaz Ke Phool’ (‘Paper Flowers’), India's first CinemaScope film, was a semi-autobiographical fantasy about a failed director. Its commercial failure stopped Dutt from taking credits for his later films; today it is regarded as a classic of Indian cinema.

As Guru Dutt's moving melodramas are screened in Britain, Pervaiz Khan, Nasreen Munni Kabir and Ashish Rajadhyaksha reflect on his achievement

THE SONG PICTURE MAN

Pervaiz Khan: Perhaps we could begin by looking at Dutt's position in the Indian film industry of the 50s, the decade in which most of his films were made.

Nasreen Munni Kabir: Dutt began his career in the mid-40s, working as an assistant within the studio system, which meant he learned his craft through the established institutions. He gained an understanding of the benefits of having a team working for you, permanently on the payroll. When he made his first film, *Baazi* (A Game of Chance) in 1951, he faced stiff competition from films such as Raj Kapoor's blockbuster *Awaara* (The Vagabond). Dutt's *Pyaasa* was released in the same year as Mehboob Khan's *Mother India*. So Dutt was working at a time when the great names of Indian cinema were also making films: Mehboob Khan, Bimal Roy, V. Shantaram and Raj Kapoor.

Ashish Rajadhyaksha: Kapoor, Khan and Shantaram all perpetuated the studio system in an era that was post-studio. Dutt didn't quite own a studio himself, but he did have a production company. The Second World War, and the arrival of the black market, saw a boom in the Indian economy, so it was at the end of the Second World War rather than with Independence that the Indian film industry changed. The studio system was demolished by a generation of so-called independent entrepreneurs – men who had made a lot of money out of the

black economy and wanted to invest it in the film industry. These entrepreneurs were not interested in owning studios with a lot of people on the payroll – they wanted quick profits from one-off investments and so were willing to pay astronomical sums to stars, directors and so on, on a freelance basis. This process soon undermined the old-style studio system. The directors you mentioned all tried to sustain the studio system so they could make their own films rather than having to work willy-nilly on a variety of projects.

NMK: At the time Dutt was regarded as good but not exceptional, because competition was so fierce. As an actor he was never a star like Dev Anand, Dilip Kumar or Raj Kapoor. Mehboob Khan liked Dutt's films, and at a time when he never let out his studio to other directors, he allowed Dutt to shoot *Mr and Mrs ‘55* there. His contemporaries respected him – they thought he was a Bengali at a time when the dominant film-makers were Bengali or Punjabi.

AR: Dutt actually belonged to a community of 8,000 – 10,000 in Bangalore. Their name for themselves means ‘us’, as opposed to ‘them’. This community had a remarkable effect on cinema – contemporary film-makers such as Girish Karnad and Shyam Benegal also belong to it. Dutt was born in Bangalore and then lived in Calcutta until he went to join Uday Shankar's dance company in Almora. He ►



In CinemaScope: 'Paper Flowers', a fantasy about the film industry and failure



Where light meets darkness: 'Paper Flowers', with the characteristic expressionist lighting of Dutt's films

GURU DUTT

Born 9 July 1925;
died 10 October 1964

Baazi (A Game of Chance)
1951

Jaal (The Net) 1952

Baaz (The Hawk) 1953

Aar Paar (From One Side
to the Other) 1954

Mr and Mrs '55 1955

Pyasa (Eternal Thirst)
1957

Kaagaz Ke Phool
(Paper Flowers) 1959

Chaudvin Ka Chand (The
Moon of the Fourteenth)
1960 (unsigned)

Sahib, Bibi Aur Ghulam
(Master, Mistress and
Servant) 1962 (unsigned)

◀ dropped his surname, Pudukone, and deliberately became Guru Dutt, taking on a Bengali idiom, a Bengali association.

PK: What are the particular characteristics of Dutt's cinema?

AR: In a film like *Pyasa*, you have an extraordinary mixture. It is set in Calcutta, there are a couple of lines of dialogue in Bengali, the film deals with Urdu poetry, therefore decadent Lucknow, and there is a corrupt businessman who is clearly from Bombay. In a sense Dutt created an all-Indian space. By the mid-50s Satyajit Ray had started his work and the question of regional rooting, of being a Bengali film-maker working in a defined area, was being addressed. It was a policy supported by the state – at around that time India was dividing itself into states and the meaning of regionalism was a matter for debate. In most areas, cinema took on the burden of representing regional identity. Dutt's work is exceptional in that it gives a sense of all India, not the India of any defined region, but a reflection of his own experience of having lived in Bangalore, Calcutta, Almora, Pune and Bombay.

NMK: I think people still find Dutt's films exciting because his characters are psychologically complex in the context of Indian cinema. His people are human, full of dilemmas, confusion and contradictions, outsiders who are incapable of fighting the system or what the system represents. Kapoor, in comparison, presents much more black and white situations.

AR: The India of Guru Dutt becomes a system against which he had to define his existence, an India which had fallen short of the pre-Independence vision, from which he was exiled, from which he had to go away and invent his utopia or define for himself a completely different sense of belonging. He addressed this question in a consistent way across different genres – for instance, in *Mr and*

Mrs '55 he deals with it through the character he plays, an outsider who has to be accepted by a clearly pre-Independence class system.

PK: How did melodrama develop?

AR: Ever since there was melodrama in Indian cinema, roughly from the beginning of sound, it has been linked to the question of nationalism. Before Independence it was a vehicle for the expression of a national utopia. The nation became a stand-in for a variety of different things to do with belonging: the patriarchal system, the community, the mother and so on. Come Independence, the national utopia, the dreams of the future that had been present in pre-Independence cinema became a reality.

NMK: I don't think realism interests audiences in India. Dutt, Kapoor and Khan were all aware of this.

AR: A film like *Sahib, Bibi Aur Ghulam* best compares with Satyajit Ray's *Jalsaghar* (The Music Room). Why is it that today *Sahib, Bibi Aur Ghulam* is considered a much more accurate depiction of the degenerate nineteenth-century feudal order than Ray's film? I think it is because Dutt took his film into the melodramatic, going beyond the literary social reform moorings Ray was locked into. The thing that makes Dutt stand out within his generation is that his cinema leans towards the epic.

PK: Dutt invested a great deal of time, energy and finance in *Kaagaz Ke Phool*. How did he take the film's failure at the box office?

NMK: V. K. Murthy, the cinematographer, said that as a rule Dutt would come on set and if he didn't find the first shot of a scene, he couldn't shoot. Once he found the first shot and it went well, he knew every shot. Kaifi Azmi, the songwriter, told me that the problem with *Kaagaz Ke Phool* was that Dutt was unclear about what he wanted to do. The story kept changing, he kept cutting and adding, cutting and

adding. He was deeply depressed when the film failed, he took it as a rejection of his personality, his vision and his work. In his personal life he was a very modest and quiet man, never saying much, but when it came to film-making he was extremely expressive, very articulate. He was a depressive – he died as a result of his third or fourth suicide attempt.

PK: What stands out in his films?

NMK: The dialogue.

AR: I'm reminded of a scene in *Mr and Mrs '55*. Dutt, who plays a newspaper cartoonist, is talking about the lot of the poor, and the high-society lady asks, "Are you communist?" He replies, "No, a cartoonist". Also, I can't think, perhaps with the exception of Ghatak, of instances where metaphor is used in a more sophisticated manner. The scene in *Kaagaz Ke Phool*, in the empty darkened studio where the male and female disembodied characters meet and then separate, is one of many examples.

NMK: There is an image of modern secular India in his films which I find attractive. I've seen *Pyasa* more than 30 times and I always read something new in it. There is a distinct look and feel to the shots in all his films and Murthy's cinematography tells another story using images. Then, of course, everybody from taxi drivers to film critics says that the songs in his films are fantastic.

AR: Musical orchestration was a new thing in India, which Dutt fully exploited: he orchestrated the plot. He had the best musical directors and poets writing songs for his films. Without a doubt Guru Dutt was India's finest song-picture director.

A programme 'Melodrama & Sexuality – The Cinema of Guru Dutt' is to be held during *Tuende – A Celebration of World Cinema* at the Electric, Birmingham from 8 to 10 October (Tel: 021 693 3616). Four of Dutt's films will be screened at the National Film Theatre, London in October and November

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Set design PHILIPPE CHIFFRE Costumes YANN TAX Music PETER CHASE Production director OURY MILSHTEN Associate producer YVES MARMION Produced by GEORGES BENAYOUN A film by MARTINE DUGOWSON
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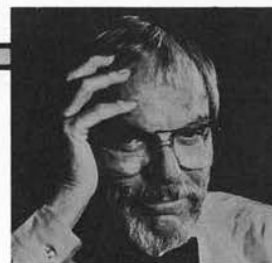
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Hysteria

Neither of us believes we are more than typically concerned with our Masculinity. Still, two films we agree we are clearly obsessed with – or perhaps haunted by to an obsessive degree – are Vincente Minnelli's *Home from the Hill* and *Tea and Sympathy*, movies we have come to think of as a sort of Castration Diptych. The occasion of our first viewing these films might have something to do with their peculiar hold on us. Several years ago we and a group of friends began to get together once a week to watch and talk over a post-war American melodrama of some variety; and in that context, among the aggressively feminine concerns of *Back Street* or *Mildred Pierce*, sandwiched between social-climbing nymphomaniac daughters and love-starved but self-sacrificing mothers, we came upon the peculiar sub-genre of the Minnelli Male Melodrama.

Perhaps it is something about the weird genre/gender conflict of a man telling a story about men in this particularly feminine idiom that gives these films their disturbing and psychotic beauty. Ultimately it's hard to say what either film might mean: conflicting and refracting levels of irony make anything beyond some lame position of utter devastation untenable.

Home from the Hill follows Theron Hunnicutt (an already pretty tan George Hamilton) as he comes of age in the family of macho Texas patriarch Wade Hunnicutt (sleepy Robert Mitchum). The problem is that due to Wade's excessive womanising, he and Hannah, his dreamy wife (played with a wondrous Hollywood Texan accent by Eleanor Parker) don't get along. Almost out of spite, Hannah coddles Theron and has not allowed Wade to make a proper man of him. Theron eventually earns Wade's respect by killing an especially mean wild boar, but when Hannah tells him that his father's rough-and-ready cowboy helper Rafe (an unbelievably cool George Peppard) is really Wade's unacknowledged bastard son, Theron disowns his father and gives up his faith in romantic love. As a result, and through a turn of events that seems to make perfect sense within the insane psycho-logic of the film, it is Rafe who marries Theron's 'in trouble' girlfriend Libby, while her father kills Wade because he believes him to have sired the unwanted baby. Theron then hunts down the father of the woman he still loves (the man who should have been his father-in-law), kills him, and goes away forever, leaving a broken Hannah, a post-natal Libby and a now cardigan-wearing Rafe to reconstruct some sense of family from the wreckage.

Tea and Sympathy sets itself a similar domestic table. Seventeen-year-old Tom Lee (John Kerr) has been sent off to prep school by his father to become a man – and to overcome the influence of an errant maid who taught him to sew and listen to folk music. But Tom is sensitive – not a "regular fella" – and prefers to garden with the housemaster's wife Laura (Deborah "shall-we-dance" Kerr), on whom he has a wild crush, than to play ball with the other guys. Those other guys start to call him "Sisterboy", and despite the well-meaning but painfully

The male melodramas of Vincente Minnelli have a psychotic beauty, say film-makers David Siegel and Scott McGehee as they watch films jammed with anxiety and embarrassment

embarrassing efforts of Laura, the downward spiral of his male identity threatens his very life. He visits a prostitute in a last-ditch effort to save his reputation, but she notices his hands are soft and feminine and suddenly remembers his nickname. As she laughingly repeats "Sisterboy, Sisterboy...", Tom is driven into a hysterical fit and tries to kill himself with (what else?) a knife from her kitchen. Laura goes to him the next day and – in a moment that never seems to grow less shocking – she gives herself to Tom in the woods near the sixth tee, to prove to him that he can perform with a woman when there is love. Yikes.

Even for melodrama, these films seem jammed with anxiety and embarrassment. When Wade announces at his dinner table, with his manly tenant farmers present, that not he but Theron will hunt the wild boar that has been terrorising local farms, Theron can't just be drinking a glass of milk, he must spill it. Or when Theron goes to a beer hall to drown his sorrows on the wedding day of his half-brother and his own pregnant girlfriend, it has to be none other than his father's cheap mistress who comes to cheer him up. This kind of nightmare logic runs rampant. Tom Lee can't just be on the dance and drama committees, he must also play a woman in the play and have a costume with a huge pale blue skirt, and that skirt must be impossible to keep in a closet so that it appears in every scene where it is most likely to be discovered by some varsity captain or by Dad.

What is truly remarkable is that scenes like this aren't played for comedy. Moments we might find laughable in other films – impossible moments of relentless cartoon-like coincidence – we take in some version of seriousness. We want to take them seriously, perhaps precisely because they have gone so far out on a limb. In one scene in *Tea and Sympathy*, some varsity boys discover Tom sewing buttons with the housemasters' wives on the beach instead of playing ball with them. It's a tough and embarrassing scene for Tom and for us: first the wives comment with mean-spirited irony on Tom's sewing skill, and then Laura, in a vain attempt to dispel the implications to Tom's

manliness, recalls that her brawny husband learned to sew in the army (the defence, as usual, cuts much deeper than the attack).

Moments later, when we join the boys who witnessed the sewing circle, Sisterboy's reputation is spiralling out of control. But the depiction of the regular fellas' afternoon is so over-the-top it is hard to believe. First we see Laura's husband Bill (played with unthrottled virility by Leif Erickson) with a bunch of beefy guys packed in tight bathing suits practising some lost form of arm-wrestling that involves holding hands and flexing torso muscles. Then one boy begins posing questions from a magazine quiz called "Are You Masculine?" This brings together a bare-skinned huddle as Bill, with each arm draped over the naked shoulder of a varsity boy, sounds out answers – "Scotch! Girls! Hunting!" – before dismissing the quiz with a wave of his powerful arm and a throaty, "What kind of test is this anyway?" When Laura calls to him from her car, he shambles towards her with the embarrassment of a boy being called from the playground by his mother, pulled from the homo-protective security of his rough-and-tumble playgroup.

This comic-book depiction of the man's world is drawn with impossibly broad strokes and its immediate purpose within the film's equation is painfully clear. It reasons too simply that repressed anxiety and perhaps even homosexual desire fuel the sissy-baiting at Tom's school. But somehow, because this is not a film about sissy-baiting or even homophobia but rather one about some more mythically structured problem of maleness, we don't hold it responsible for its absurd husky straw men, or for the simplicity of this early thesis. Instead, we allow these caricatures to raise the pitch of the macho frenzy to a point far beyond anything a more subtle depiction might be capable of. Instead of dismissing them, or being offended by them, we allow them to affect us deeply, like some terrifying castration anxiety – an anxiety we don't even believe we have.

Ultimately it is their careening, psycho-driven logic that keeps these films worth watching. No matter how tidy a package the genre may wrap things into by the film's end, no matter how domestic and liberal a solution we find ourselves arriving at, the out-of-control journey has too much radical inertia to be contained. Tom Lee could wear an even bigger wedding band than he already wears in *Tea and Sympathy*'s paste-on epilogue and Rafe could drive Hannah home in the station wagon for dinner every Sunday until little baby Terrance has pathological children of his own. It wouldn't matter. We've killed the grandfather of our son and made our mother crazy. There's no hope for the family, no hope for our impossibly patriarchal mess of a culture. And certainly no hope for our own little malformed sissy/masculine psyches in this hopelessly macho world.

Maybe we are more than typically concerned with our own Masculinity? Siegel and McGehee's film *'Suture'* opens at the ICA, London, in the new year



The making of a man: Deborah Kerr and John Kerr in *'Tea and Sympathy'*

REVIEWS

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Screenplay

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Continuity

Montse Ovdorica

Director of Photography

Gonzalo Fernández

Berridi

Underwater Photography

Manuel Rodríguez

Video

Mónica Agullo

TV Report

Photos: Paco Navarro

Styling: Beatriz

Golzueta

Co-ordinator:

Cayetano Carral

Graphics

Pérez-Enciso

Editor

María Elena Sainz de

Rozas

Art Director

Alvaro Machimbarrena

Set Decorator

Satur Idarreta

Scenic Artist

Pedro Pablo Villalba

Special Effects

Reyes Abados

Wardrobe

María Isabel Gutiérrez

Make-up

Gregorio Mendi

Hairstylist

Pilar Borja

Title Design

Carlos Santos

Music

Alberto Iglesias

Songs/Music Extracts

"Elisa", "La Ardilla

Roja" by Julio Medem,

performed by Txetxo

Bengoetxea; "Let There

Be Love" by James

Grant, performed by

Nat King Cole; "Kammt

ein schlammer Buisch"

(from "Der Freischütz")

by Karl Maria von

Weber

Choreography

Ana Medem

Sound Recordist

Julio Recuero

Sound Mixer

Eduardo Fernández

Song Recordist

Gugu

Digital Sound

Goldstein & Steinberg

Cast

Nancho Novo

Jota

Emma Suárez

Lisa

María Barranco

Carmen

Carmelo Gómez

Félix

Karra Elejalde

Anton

Cristina Marcos

Girl with Blue Hair

Mónica Molina

Girl with Red Hair

Ana Gracia

Psychiatrist

Elena Iureta

Begoña

Susana García

Eli

Ane Sánchez

Cristina

Eneko Irizar

Alberto

Sarai Noceda

Ana

Maite Yerro

Nicola

Txema Blasco

Neurologist

Chete Lera

Salvador

Gustavo Salmerón

Luis Alfonso

Susana Hernández

José María Sacristán

Doctors

Andreas Prittwitz

Otto

Roberto Cairo

Michel

Mikel Laskurain

Maite Jiménez

Young Stretcher

Bearers

Amaia Merino

Amaia Lizarralde

Nurses

Teresa Calo

Secretary

Ane Sánchez

Eneko Irizar

Sarai Noceda

Boys

9,360 feet

104 minutes

Dolby stereo

In colour

Subtitles

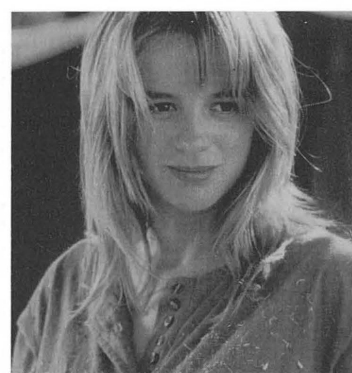
Jota, a failed rock musician deserted by his girlfriend, is contemplating suicide one night by the sea in his native San Sebastian. Suddenly a motorbike crashes on to the beach. Accompanying its shocked rider to the hospital, Jota claims that he is her boyfriend. Claiming to have lost her memory, 'Lisa' (as Jota has named her) rides off with Jota to a campsite on the edge of a reservoir. It is called 'The Red Squirrel' after the notoriously shy animal that lives in the forest there. The

new couple meet a vacationing family with whom they become friendly: machista taxi driver Anton, brow-beaten housewife Carmen and their precocious son and daughter. When the boy hypnotises Lisa, Jota learns she is really 'Sofia', and is fleeing from her psychotic husband Felix. Both Jota and Lisa take advantage of her amnesia to invent fantasies about themselves and each other.

After they become romantically involved, Jota and Lisa hear a radio announcement placed by Felix asking for news of her whereabouts. Notified by the taxi driver, Felix arrives and challenges Jota, cutting off his own cheek to show his devotion to his wife. Lisa/Sofia flees on her motorbike; the two men follow in Felix's car (he is a notorious hit-and-run driver). When it plunges into the reservoir, Jota escapes but Felix drowns. Jota discovers that the hospital orderly to whom he had given invented details of Lisa's identity at the start of the film is in fact Sofia's brother. Through him he tracks her down to the squirrel enclosure in the Madrid zoo. They embrace.

In the bravura opening sequence of *The Red Squirrel*, Emma Suarez's Lisa literally falls to earth, thrown from her motorbike out of a black sky onto an eerily white beach. Imprisoned by her helmet and photographed upside down, Lisa is strangely reminiscent of an astronaut. Nacho Novo's curious Jota asks who she is. She replies that she does not know. If the ever inventive plot of *The Red Squirrel* poses woman as an enigma, and stages the man's quest for knowledge of her, then that classic male investigation will be questioned throughout, flipped over by hints of what women may know of men and of each other: Lisa's real name will prove to be Sofia ('wisdom').

The hints of *Vertigo* in *The Red Squirrel*'s plot are taken up by a musical theme in Alberto Iglesias' varied and hypnotic soundtrack. But although Suarez's character is (like Kim Novak's) literally made up by her mesmerised male admirer, Medem questions this femininity by design through what he has called "the ridicule of virility". Thus there are well judged moments of complicity between the women characters, who may always know more than they choose to reveal; and Lisa's new identity is not so much imposed on her as accepted by her as a new and promising role. Moreover, in spite of the repeated associations of woman and nature at the level of plot and cinematography (with Lisa gazing up to the tree where the squirrel remains obstinately invisible, or swimming into the mysterious depths of the reservoir), she is no elemental nature goddess. Like the frequent subjective shots from the perspective of animals (the squirrel once more) or objects (in one case a jukebox), the natural location is an other place or point of view from which men, less imaginative and earth bound than women, are inevitably excluded. Jota's only contact with the



Basque in the sunlight: Emma Suárez

squirrel is the pine cones and faeces it drops on his head at strategic moments.

But if feminine identity is put into question, with Lisa merely playing along with a game whose consequences will prove to be unpredictable, then national identity is a yet more delicate subject for a film-maker so closely identified with his native Basque references: the physical types of the actors; the names of places and characters (Basque versions preferred to Castilian); the sea and the forest, mythic locations of an ancient and proud ethnic origin. Yet once more, Medem plays subtly with these stereotypes, refusing both the intrusive nods to contemporary events or the heavy-handed references to folklore and tradition which some Basque films feel obliged to make. Defiantly unrepresentative (in spite of his predominantly Basque cast and crew), Medem sets most of the film at the campsite in La Rioja, a liminal region on the border with Castille. And it is typical of his finely judged humour that the site, so far from the south and with an artificial lake to boot, should advertise its 'Mediterranean atmosphere'. Jota's unlikely pop video, with its Druid-like musicians pounding Stone Age instruments, might also be read as an affectionate satire on the pretensions of regional identity. Like Lisa, then, the reservoir is man-made, serving as a receptacle for fantasies which are at once personal (those of Jota) and collective (those of men, Basques, or Spaniards).

Beyond such subtleties (and it should be stressed that Medem's touch is always light even at his most serious), British audiences will admire *The Red Squirrel* for its inventive plot, its dazzling technique and its fine performances from the principals and supporting players. Suarez is finally allowed to do more than be sensuous in films, as she is in Paco Periñán's incestuous melodrama *Contra el viento* (*Against the Wind*, 1991); and María Barranco surprises as a put-upon provincial housewife, a long way from the Madrid comedies of Almodóvar and Fernando Colomo, for which she is best known. Moving on, then, from the historical epic *Vacas*, but preserving its off-beat humour and spectacular visual style, *The Red Squirrel* confirms Medem's place as one of the most original and distinctive directors working in Europe today.

Paul Julian Smith

Attack of the 50 Ft. Woman

USA 1994

Director: Christopher Guest

Certificate

12
Distributor
 Entertainment
Production Company
 HBO Pictures presents
 In association with
 Warner Bros Television
 A Bartleby Ltd
 production
Executive Producer
 Joseph Dougherty
Producer
 Debra Hill
Co-producers
 Chuck Binder
 Daryl Hannah
 Andrew G. La Marca
 Dan Mizell
Unit Production Manager
 Andrew G. La Marca
Location Manager
 Kevin Halloran
Post-production Supervisor
 Bradley M. Goodman
Assistant Directors
 Raymond "Josh" King
 Marcei Brubaker
Casting
 Mary Gail Artz
 Barbara Cohen
 Associate:
 Keri Choi
Screenplay
 Joseph Dougherty
 Based on the 1958 film
 written by Mark Hanna
Script Supervisor
 Lou Ann Quast
Director of Photography
 Russell Carpenter
Additional Photography
 Karl Walter Lindenlaub
 Dick Bowen
Visual Effects Photography
 Christopher Warren
Optical Photography
 David Tucker
 Don Fergus
Aerial Photography
 David Nowell
Camera Operator
 Tony Cutrono
Special Visual Effects
 Fantasy II Film Effects
 Supervisor:
 Gene Warren Jnr
 Co-ordinator:
 Michael Muscal
 Producer:
 Leslie Huntley
 Post-production
 Co ordinator:
 Juliette Yager
 Post-production
 Associate:
 Bryan Gawron
Model Supervisor
 Michael Joyce
Opticals
 Supervisor:
 Betty Bromberg
 Line-up:
 Linda Henry
Editor
 Harry Keramidas
Production Designer
 Joseph T. Garrity
Visual Consultants
 Brooke Breton
 Jerdy Pojawa
Art Director
 Pat Tagliaferro
Set Decorators
 Linda Allen
 Dena Roth
Set Dresser
 Greg Alcus
Scenic Artists
 Ken Deubel
 John Stewart

Storyboard Artists

Andrea Dietrich
 Jerry Koch
 Peter Von Sholly
Mechanical Effects
Co ordinator
 F. Lee Stone
Pyrotechnics
 Joseph Viskocil
Costume Design
 Arianne Phillips
Wardrobe Supervisor
 Mette Hansen
Make-up
 Gina Monaci
Special Make-up Effects
 Kurtzman, Nicotero
 & Berger EFX Group
 Supervisors:
 Howard Berger
 Robert Kurtzman
 Gregory Nicotero
Hairstylist
 Gina Monaci
Title Design
 Doty Swofford
Titles/Opticals
 Pacific Title
Music
 Nicholas Pike
Music Editor
 Stan Jones
Songs
 "Stand Tall" by
 Andrew Gold, Greg
 Prestopino, performed
 by Greg Prestopino;
 "Too Many Nights",
 "Down in Louisiana"
 by and performed by
 Michael McKean,
 Christopher Guest
Choreography
 Patsy Swayze
Supervising Sound Editor
 David Hankins
Sound Editors
 Peter Bergen
 Joe Earle
 Barbara Issak
 Brian Thomas Nist
 Ralph Osborne
 Matthew Sawelson
 Bruce Tanis
ADR/Foley Editors
 Jim Hebenstreit
 Albert Lord III
Production Sound Mixers
 Robert Anderson Jnr
 Ken Willingham
Sound Re-recorders
 Wayne Heitman
 Scott Ganary
 Tom Perry
Stunt Co-ordinator
 Rawn Hutchinson

Cast

Daryl Hannah
 Nancy Archer
 Daniel Baldwin
 Harry Archer
 William Windom
 Hamilton Cobb
 Frances Fisher
 Dr Cushing
 Christi Conaway
 Honey
 Paul Benedict
 Dr Loeb
 O'Neal Compton
 Sheriff Denby
 Victoria Haas
 Deputy Charlie
 Spooner
 Lewis Arquette
 Mr Ingersol
 Berta Waagfjord
 Greg Benson
 Alien Women
 Xander Berkeley
 Man
 Linda Bisesti
 Reporter

Hamilton Camp
 Prospector Eddie
 Ben Cleveland
 Hank Stratton
 Co-pilots
 Richard Edson
 Tony
 George Gerdes
 Scott Williamson
 Pilots
 Dru Mouser
 Teen Girl
 Stephen Rowe
 Nice Looking Man
 Edmund L. Shaff
 Mayor Thayer

Hilary Shepard
 Nurse
 Barry Watson
 Teen Boy
 Maud Winchester
 Donna
 8,023 feet
 89 minutes
 Dolby stereo
 In colour
 CFI

A group of tourists gather for an audio-visual presentation at the Nancy Cobb museum to hear an incredible story. Nancy is an heiress who lives in a small desert town. Afflicted with a tyrannical father and a philandering husband, Harry Archer, she takes comfort in her sessions with her therapist Dr Cushing, who tries in vain to get her to express her anger towards the men around her. One night, after discovering Harry has been at a motel with hairdresser Honey, Nancy drives into the desert to calm herself down. There, she witnesses an UFO which emits a beam of light into her. Nancy hurries back to town and tells Sheriff Denby and his put-upon female deputy, Charlie Spooner. Her husband and father are incredulous and construe her story as evidence of her wavering sanity. They suspect that Nancy will end up in a sanatorium like her mother. Harry secretly hopes to benefit from Nancy's estate and continue his affair with Honey. Nancy tells Dr Cushing about the UFO incident and the therapist takes her seriously. Later, Harry talks to Cushing and tells her that he wants Nancy committed, but Cushing dismisses this proposal.

Nancy persuades Harry to help her look for the UFO. In the desert, the couple spot the spaceship, which beams down and whisks Nancy away. Nancy wakes up to find herself on the roof of Honey's apartment, in an unusually forceful mood. Harry attempts to get Nancy diagnosed as a hysterical amnesiac. Losing her patience, Nancy shouts at everyone, at which point she grows to an enormous size. Nancy goes to live in a barn on the family estate. Everyone tries to adapt to the new assertive Nancy - Harry's hopes are raised by the fact that her new size places a strain on her heart. One night Nancy arranges to have dinner à deux with Harry to revive their marriage. They end up arguing and Nancy faints. Harry, believing she is dead, goes off to see Honey. Nancy comes to and goes on the rampage in search of Harry, terrifying the townsfolk. Nancy finds Honey and Harry and takes off with him. Watched by a crowd of onlookers including her father, Dr Cushing and the police, Nancy and Harry are beamed up into the spaceship. On board, Harry finds himself in a men's discussion group supervised by a trio of towering women.

If the original 1958 version of *Attack of the 50 Ft. Woman* could be described as proto-feminist, this remake by director Christopher Guest

(*The Big Picture*) and producer Debra Hill (whose credits include *Halloween* and *Big Top Pee-Wee*) is feminist writ large. Indeed, so large that it verges on parody, though there is sympathy enough for the subject to prevent it from becoming ridiculous. Certainly, it is in keeping with other contemporary horror-comedies in that the subtext walks tall rather than cowering in the shadows. Nancy Archer is a put-upon woman who has had enough. Unlike her predecessor, who had some fighting spirit before she became acquainted with the helpful extra-terrestrials, this Nancy starts out as a demure, somewhat insipid good girl who not only has to deal with a philandering husband but a domineering father. Thus she has much to talk about in her therapy sessions, where her sympathetic analyst Dr Cushing is keen to help her express her anger. But the new version extends sympathy to other females in the community too. The sheriff is shown haranguing his woman deputy, while Honey is portrayed less as a sexpot than as a victim of sexism.

The attitudes towards women of the menfolk of the small desert town seem to be marooned in the 50s, despite the fact that at one point Harry claims to be 'post-feminist'. As Hamilton Cobb puts Nancy in her place yet again, we derive great pleasure from seeing her break out. Daryl Hannah's customary ethereal quality (*Splash*, *High Spirits*, *Roxanne*) is displaced as she changes from fey to fierce and fearless. Those alien beams do wonders not only for her size but also her well-being - her lank hair becomes luxuriant and her pallor a healthy glow. But this superwoman inspires trepidation rather than desire in men. When Nancy suggests to Harry that they could find love together "on the scale of Gulliver", he rejects the idea as "sick... unnatural". She is now all-engulfing, and her dominion knows no bounds. Unlike in the 1958 version, Nancy's triumph is complete, in that the women she leaves behind are inspired by her (Honey becomes a financial whiz, Deputy Charlie is promoted and Dr Cushing hosts her own talk show). Meanwhile, up in the spaceship, the men are kept firmly in hand. The film-makers may do little more than state the obvious, but this engaging material still has power. The message is, girls - don't get mad, get big!

Lizzie Francke



Big girl's blues: Daryl Hannah

City Slickers II: "The Legend of Curly's Gold"

USA 1994

Director: Paul Weiland

Certificate

12
Distributor
 Columbia TriStar
Production Company
 Face Production
 For Castle Rock
 Entertainment/
 Columbia Pictures
Executive Producer
 Peter Schindler
Producer
 Billy Crystal
Production Co-ordinator
 Lisa Lynn Kearsley
Production Managers
 Kelly Van Horn
 2nd Unit:
 Jim Behnke
Location Managers
 Rick Dallago
 New York:
 Jacob Conrad
2nd Unit Director
 Mickey Gilbert
Assistant Directors
 Bill Elvin
 Alan Edmisten
 Scott Bryant
 2nd Unit:
 John Woodward
 Keri L. McIntyre
 Thomas Schellenberg
 New York:
 Alex Hapsas
 Dan Stillman
 Danielle Rigby
 T. Sean Ferguson
Casting
 Associates:
 Naomi Yoelin
 Amy Gerber
Screenplay
 Billy Crystal
 Lowell Ganz
 Babaloo Mandel
Script Supervisors
 Marion Tumen
 2nd Unit:
 Wayne Damore
Directors of Photography
 Adrian Biddle
 New York:
 Craig Haagensen
2nd Unit Director of Photography
 Don McCaig
Camera Operators
 Craig Haagensen
 2nd Unit:
 David Diano
 George Stephenson
 New York:
 Robert Wagner
 Additional:
 William Gerardo
B Camera/Steadicam Operator
 Randy Nolen
Special Visual Effects
 Matte World
 Executive in Charge
 of Production:
 Krystyna Demkowicz
Visual Effects Co-ordinator
 Mark Vargo
Matte Artist Supervisor
 Michael Pangrazio
Director of Matte Photography
 Craig Barron
Animation
 Kurtz & Friends
Film Editors
 William Anderson
 Armen Minasian
Production Designer
 Stephen J. Lineweaver
Art Director
 Philip Toolin

Set Design

Richard McKenzie
 Nancy Patton
Set Decorator
 Clay A. Griffith
Set Dressers
 Bruce Bellamy
 Wayne Shepherd
 Greg Wilkinson
 Utah:
 John Garrett
 Christopher Griffith
 John Hartman
 Alan Kaneshiro
Illustrators
 Jack Johnson
 Donna Cline
 Tom Lay
Sculptures
 Christoph
 Rittershausen
 Fred Arbagast
 M. Le Vitre
Models
 Robert Woodruff
Special Effects Supervisor
 Steve Galich
Special Effects
 Robert Ayre Jnr
 Raymond Beetz
 Randy Cabral
 Dominik Dugandzic
 Jeff Frink
 Michael Roundy
 Jimmy Thomson
Costume Supervisor
 Llandys Williams
Make-up Artist:
 Todd McIntosh
 Key/New York:
 Peter Montagna
Hairstylists
 Gwynne Lauri Redner
 Key/New York:
 Bill Farley
Main Titles Animation
 Bob Kurtz
Titles
 Pittard Sullivan
 Fitzgerald
Opticals
 Cinema Research
 Corporation
 Pacific Title
Music
 Marc Shaiman
Music Conductor
 Artie Kane
Orchestrations
 Jeff Atmajian
 Frank Bennett
 Larry Blank
 Brad Dechter
 Jerry Hey
Music Producer
 Marc Shaiman
Music Editor
 Michael Linn
Music Consultant
 Arlene Fishbach
 Enterprises
Music Extracts
 "The Godfather
 Waltz" by Nino Rota;
 "Treasure of the Sierra
 Madre" by Max Steiner
Production Sound
 Jeff Wexler
 Don Coufal
 Gary Holland
Supervising Sound Editor
 David E. Stone
Sound Editors
 Warren Hamilton Jnr
 Paul Timothy Carden
 Hector Gilka
 Joe Dorn
Digital Dialogue Editors
 Richard Corwin
 J. H. Arrufat

ADR Supervisor
Mary Andrews
Supervising Foley Editor
Vanessa Theme Ament
Foley Editor
Ed Callahan
Foley Mixer
David Jobe
Foley Recordist
Don Givens
Scoring Mixer
Shawn Murphy
Re-recording Mixers
Kevin O'Connell
Rick Kline
Sound Effects Recordists
Eric Potter
Patricio Libenson
Foley Artists
Vanessa Theme Ament
Alicia Stevenson
ADR Voiceover Co-ordinator
Vanessa Theme Ament
Special Vocal Effects
Frank Welker
Stunt Co-ordinator
Mickey Gilbert
Wranglers
Boss:
Jack Lilley
Gang Boss:
Dan Spaeth
Dick Cole
Steve Hanna
Richard Lilley
Animal Trainer:
Carol Sonheim
Bird Handlers
Mac Embray
Mark Jackson

Cast
Billy Crystal
Mitch Robbins
Daniel Stern
Phil Berquist

Jon Lovitz
Glen Robbins
Jack Palance
Duke/Curly Washburn
Patricia Wettig
Barbara Robbins
Pruitt Taylor Vince
Bud
Bill McKinney
Matt
Lindsay Crystal
Holly Robbins
Beth Grant
Lois
Noble Willingham
Clay Stone
David Paymer
Ira Shalowitz
Josh Mostel
Barry Shalowitz
Jayne Meadows
Mitch's Mother
Alan Charof
Mitch's Father
Kenneth S. Allen
Annoyed Man
Jennifer Crystal
Irmise Brown
Joggers
Molly McClure
Millie Stone
Helen Siff
Shushing Lady
Bill McIntosh
Mario Roberts
Clay's Sons

10,409 feet
116 minutes

Dolby stereo
In colour
Technicolor
Prints by
Technicolor



Saddle sore: Billy Crystal, Jon Lovitz

to disarm the attackers, the whole incident is revealed to be part of an adventure holiday which the Stones (the ranchers who employed Curly) now run, including a fake treasure trail and a surprise ambush with blanks.

Disappointed, Mitch returns to Las Vegas, and is expecting his wife when Duke gatecrashes. He informs Mitch that he really did find the treasure in the cave, and that although he originally intended to double-cross his friends, he remembered that the one thing which was always so important to Curly was loyalty.

The original *City Slickers* had enough horse sense to keep most of its soft-core satirical swipes for the thirtysomething generation rather than the Westerns which they obviously grew up with and held in such affection. This was a feeling no doubt shared by scriptwriters Ganz and Mandel (joined in the sequel by Billy Crystal), who never lost sight of the fact that *City Slickers* had to deliver punchlines, pretty scenery and character development to complement the indulgence of something as little box-office-friendly as a cattle drive.

City Slickers II shares most of the original's cast, including a momentarily resurrected twin Jack Palance, although Bruno Kirby is here replaced by the gonzo-like Jon Lovitz. But this time the self-indulgence factor is very much to the fore, with the plot neatly encapsulated within the inverted commas of the subtitle. The sense of suburban inertia that urges Mitch, Phil and Ed to roam free on the range is now simply a creative vacuum sucking in as many movie references and borrowed comic devices as the running time requires. Starting with the *Carrie* dream sequence (does anybody visit a grave in Hollywood without being grabbed by a hand of the undead?), the film allows Crystal a free run. Literally so, in the case of the jogging sequence with Norma, the calf from the first film,

now a fully uteddered cow and possibly the only character in the film showing any signs of maturity; and metaphorically so, as he does a Walter Huston jig to acknowledge the shadow (and the Max Steiner score) of *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*.

Thus Mitch is revealed as still harbouring a saddle-yearning itch on his fortieth birthday (wife Barbara continues to be the paradigm of a perfectly passive partner), while Phil can only aspire to carnal and emotional fulfilment on radio phone-ins. The only change is the arrival of Mitch's brother Glen (Lovitz), who sublimates his sibling rivalry by assuming the *God-father* character Fredo Corleone (and who delivers the film's funniest turn). In fact, all three treasure hunters are so steeped in movie lore that the only surprising moment is when they fail to recognise Bill McKinney and Pruitt Taylor Vince as the villainous holiday poopers from *Deliverance* (Vince being an almost exact body double for McKinney's original cohort, Herbert 'Cowboy' Coward).

All this might have been forgivable if the film had ended on the note of irony it briefly threatens to leave us with: the treasure map turns out to be a tourist ruse and Mitch is left empty-handed and alone in a Vegas hotel room, with the prospect of having to explain to his wife why he blew a lucrative business deal on a treasure hunt. It's a denouement framed almost as cruelly as the original *Sierra Madre*. Unfortunately, instead of saying something meaningful about grown men's inability to distinguish between film fantasy and everyday reality, *City Slickers II* compounds matters by having Duke discover (and then share) the treasure with his friends. It is a jarring moment, not just because of its sentimentality but also because it betrays the original film's own contribution to movie mythology - Palance's Oscar-winning turn as Duke's late twin.

Farrah Anwar

Clear and Present Danger

USA 1994

Director: Phillip Noyce

Certificate
12
Distributor
UIP
Production Company
Paramount Pictures
Producers
Mace Neufeld
Robert Rehme
Co-producer
Ralph S. Singleton
Associate Producer
Lis Kern
Production Associate
David B. Leener
Production Co-ordinators
Debbie Schwab
Washington DC:
Monica Levinson
Mexico:
Belinda Uriegas
Production Managers
E.C. Itsi Atkins
Mexico:
Anna Roth
Unit Manager
Gerardo Barrera
Location Managers
Stuart A. Neumann
Peter J. Novak
Washington DC:
Foongy Lee
Peggy Pridemore
Mexico:
Nicole Kolin
2nd Unit Directors
David R. Ellis
F18 Sequence:
Craig Hosking
Assistant Directors
Alan B. Curtiss
Robert M. Huberman
2nd Unit:
Michael Green
Sean McCarron
Mexico:
Sebastian Silva
Carlos Hidalgo
Miguel Lima
Joaquin Silva
Casting
Mindy Marin
Associate:
John Papsidera
Mexico:
Claudia Becker
Voice:
Barbara Harris
Screenplay
Donald Stewart
Steven Zaillian
John Millius
Based on the novel
by Tom Clancy
Script Supervisors
Faye Brenner
2nd Unit:
Ingrid Ulrich-Sass
Director of Photography
Donald McAlpine
2nd Unit Director of Photography
Michael A. Benson
Matte Photography
Craig Barron
Camera Operators
Douglas Ryan
2nd Unit:
Joe Valentine
Michael St. Hillare
Mexico:
Guillermo Rosas
Steadicam Operator
Ian Jones
Visual Effects
VFX/Video Image
Executive in Charge
of Production:
Krystyna Demkowicz
Supervisor:
Robert Grasmere
Producers:
Michael Van
Himbergen
Jeffrey A. Diamond

Co-ordinator:
Paul Taglianetti
Smart Bomb Sequence
Kleiser-Walczak
Construction Company
Computer Animation
Supervisor
Jeffrey Kleiser
Head Animator
Ed Kramer
Matte Paintings
Matte World Digital
Matte Artist Supervisor
Michael Pangrazio
Editor
Neil Travis
Associate Editors
Andrew S. Eisen
Tim Tommasino
Production Designer
Terence Marsh
Art Directors
William Cruse
Mexico:
Fernando Ramirez
Set Design
Dawn Snyder
Set Decorator
Mickey S. Michaels
Jay R. Hart
Mexico:
Michael Seirton
Set Dressers
Bob Camron
Jim Husbands
John Schacht
Mexico:
Hermelindo (Melo)
Hinojosa
Illustrator
David Negrón Jr
Special Effects Co-ordinators
Joe Lombardi
Paul Lombardi
Washington DC:
Phil Fravel
Mexico:
Laurencio Cordero
Special Effects
Robert G. Willard
Costume Design
Bernie Pollack
Costume Supervisors
Hugo Pena
Mark A. Paterson
Mexico:
Jaime Ortiz
Make-up Artists
Peter Robb-King
Pat Gerhardt
2nd Unit:
Dennis Glass
Mexico:
Raul Sarmiento
Hairstylists
Carol Meikle
Beatrice DeAlba
Anne Michelle Morgan
2nd Unit:
Katherine Gordon
Mexico:
Esperanza Gomez
Title Design
Nina Saxon Design
Titles/Opticals
Pacific Title
Music
James Horner
Pan pipes performed by
Tony Hinnigan
Mike Taylor
Music Conductor
James Horner
Orchestrations
Don Davis
Music Supervisor
Tim Sexton
Supervising Music Editor
Jim Henrikson
Music Editor
Joe E. Rand

Songs/Music Extracts

"Climbing in Geometry" by and performed by William Ackerman; "Bacalao con pan" by Raul Valdes, performed by Irakere; "Cocktail Time" by Sam Fonteyn; "Semper fidelis" by John Philip Sousa; "Pa mi coleccion" by and performed by Vico C; "Happy Birthday to You" by Mildred Hill, Patty Hill; "CNN Breaking News No.2 Theme" by Herb Avery; "El pescador de baru" by Isaac Villanueva, performed by Los Warahuaco; "America the Beautiful" by Katherine Lee Bates, Samuel A. Ward; "Peligro" by and performed by D. Brent Nelson; "Dulce material" by E.Z.D.; Francheska, performed by Francheska; "Il viaggio a Reims (Die Reise nach Reims)" by Gioacchino Rossini, performed by Plovdiv Philharmonic Orchestra; "Largo" by Anton Dvorak

Supervising Sound Editors

Bruce Stambler
John Leveque

Dialogue

Joseph A. Ippolito

Dialogue Editors

Carin Rogers

Gloria D'Alessandro

Richard Corwin

Supervising ADR Editor

Becky Sullivan

ADR Editors

Stephen Janisz

Lee Lemont

Supervising Foley Editor

Pamela Bentkowsky

Foley Editors

Jeffy Payne

Christine Danelski

Sound Mixers

Arthur Rochester

2nd Unit:

Tom Nelson

Washington DC:

Alan Perry

Music:

Shawn Murphy

ADR Mixer

Bob Baron

Foley Mixer

Eric Gotthelf

Sound Re-recorders

Donald O. Mitchell

Michael Herbeck

Frank A. Montano

Sound Effects Editors

Donald L. Warner Jr

Jay Nierenberg

Glen Hoskinson

Steve Mann

David Stone

Jeff Sandler

Frank Howard

Foley Artists

Ken Dufva

David Lee Fein

Weapons Adviser

Jared Chandler

Stunt Co-ordinator

Dirk Ziker

Aerial Co-ordinator/Pilot

Craig Hosking

Boat Co-ordinator

Ransom C. Walrod

Armourer

Jesus Almonte

Cast

Harrison Ford

Jack Ryan

Willem Dafoe

Clark

Anne Archer

Cathy Ryan

Joaquin de Almeida

Felix Cortez

Henry Czerny

Robert Ritter

Harris Yulin

James Cutter

Donald Moffat

President Bennett

Miguel Sandoval

Ernesto Escobedo

Benjamin Bratt

Captain Ramirez

Raymond Cruz

Chavez

Dean Jones

Judge Moore

Thora Birch

Sally Ryan

Ann Magnuson

Moir Wolfson

Hope Lange

Senator Mayo

Tom Lamm

Emile Jacobs

Tim Grimm

Dan Murray

Belita Moreno

Jean Fowler

James Earl Jones

Admiral Greer

Jorge Luke

Sipo

Jaime Gomez

Sergeant Oso

Jared Chandler

Insertion Team Radio

Man

Greg Germann

Petey

Ellen Geer

Rose

Ted Raimi

Satellite Analyst

Vondie Curtis-Hall

Voice Print Analyst

John Lafayette

Beau Lotterman

CIA Analysts

Rex Linn

Washington Detective

Peter Weirter

FBI Director's

Bodyguard

Victor Palmieri

Ambassador Ferris

Trip Hamilton

White House Guard

Ken Howard

Committee Chairman

Alexander Lester

John Ryan Jr

Reg E. Cathey

Sergeant Major

Clark Gregg

Staff Sergeant

Chris Conrad

Sniper Sergeant

Vaughn Armstrong

Blackhawk Pilot

John Putsch

Blackhawk Co-pilot

Coleen Flynn

Coast Guard Captain

Reed Diamond

Coast Guard Chief

Cam Brainard

Brendan Ford

Michael Jace

Coast Guards

Cameron Thor

DEA Surveillance

Agent

Harley Venton

Miguel Perez

DEA Agents

Patrick Bauchau

Enrique Rojas

Juan Carlos Colombo

Cortez's Bodyguard

Blanca Guerra

Escobedo's Wife

Rufino Echegoyen

Escobedo's Driver

Honorato Magallini

Mining Company

Manager

Mario Ivan Martinez

Chemist

Eduardo Andrade

Eduardo

Hector Teller

Hector

Alejandro Bracho

Fernandez

Roberta Arratia

Eliot Ferrer

Colombian Hitmen

David J. Negron Jr

Cartel Accountant

Michael A. Mendez

Cartel Gunman

Sebastian Silva

Cartel Member

Diana Sowle

Cartel Maid

Kamala Dawson

Venezuelan

Telephonist

Guillermo Rios

Gate House Guard

Alejandro De Hoyos

Spanish Reporter

Leo Garcia

CNN Reporter

Barbara Harrison

TV Reporter

Mark Bailey

Elizabeth Dennehy

Reporters

Patricia Belcher

INS Officer

Aaron Lustig

Dr Polk

Tom Isbell

Restaurant Doctor

Kim Flowers

Restaurant Hostess

Claudia Lobo

Ritter's Wife

Al Verdun

Ritter's Secretary

Lynne Marie Stewart

Greer's Secretary

Catherine MacNeal

Greer's Nurse

Denise Kumagai

Nurse

Christine J. Moore

Greer's Widow

Marjorie Lovett

President's Secretary

Lee Bear

Cutter's Bodyguard

Jeffrey King

Jefferson

Glenn E. Coats

Hotel Clerk

Kevin Cooney

CIA Counsel

Elizabeth Kern

Horse Trainer

Thomas Luskey

Homicide Detective

John Rixey Moore

Spook

12.720 feet

101 minutes

Dolby stereo

In colour

DeLuxe

Anamorphic

ordered the operation shutdown. Ryan and Clark search the jungle and find one survivor, US Army sniper Chavez. Ryan walks into Escobedo's mansion and gives him proof that Cortez is plotting against Escobedo. Ryan and Escobedo confront Cortez at his coffee factory HQ; Escobedo is shot. As the group escape by helicopter, Chavez shoots Cortez dead. Back in the US, the President tells Ryan the country can't afford another scandal; Ryan replies that he won't lie. He later gives evidence at a Congressional hearing on the affair.

After *The Hunt for Red October* and *Patriot Games*, this is the third Tom Clancy novel to be filmed, and the second to star Harrison Ford as Jack Ryan. Excepting some of the dialogue, the book is in every way superior to the movie, largely because of the film-makers' ham-fisted attempt to reshape Clancy's complex storyline into a straightforward star vehicle for Ford.

In both novel and film, Ryan is the moral centre, but the film jettisons the book's range of supporting characters whose differing values help define his position. It turns most of those who remain into caricature villains, and Ryan himself into a standard-issue action hero. In the book, however, Chavez and Clark each get roughly the same amount of space as Ryan and handle almost all the action scenes. By virtually eliminating Chavez from the screenplay and downgrading Clark to a supporting player, the screenwriters make more space for Ryan, but lose the moral perspective on him that these two provide.

Ford offers his best lump-in-throat queasy look – as perfected in *Presumed Innocent* – but, for most of the film, his tenuous position within the storyline is more reminiscent of an Alan J. Pakula movie than a conventional action thriller. For Clancy to put Ryan on the outside of things allowed him to maintain Ryan's integrity while at the same time developing an ironic scenario in which justice and the law are repeatedly seen to be at cross purposes. The screenplay, however, ignores this crucial theme, consistently leaving out those episodes in the novel which flesh it out. Instead, the President, Cutter and Ritter are made to be simply wrong and Ryan simply right.

Clancy doesn't offer any easy solutions to the moral conundrum he creates for Ryan: should he get with the programme or go public? The film suppresses that problem and makes it easier for both Ryan and the audience to choose sides. Taking a very murky story, it transforms Ryan into a clear and present action hero.

Ryan's guarantee to the Senate hearing that he knows nothing of US covert involvement in Colombia is another screenplay invention to further foreground his integrity. But what are we to make of the intercutting between Greer's funeral and the ambush of the US troops? Do the troops represent a violation of the patriotic principles which defined Greer's life, or do they embody that spirit? This is both the most impressive and the most ambiguous sequence of the film, and the only sequence which approaches the book's involved level of moral debate. Clancy ends with Ryan agreeing to a cover-up of the operation. Given a suitably sarcastic slant, that ending would almost be worthy of a 70s conspiracy thriller, but it certainly wouldn't wash in what aims to be a feel-good blockbuster.

Hence the film's substitution of an industrial strength dose of heroic integrity for Ryan. Here, the rescue mission is a straightforward way for him to right wrongs and put the corrupt political past behind him. His actions in rescuing the survivors and in testifying before the House Committee will consign the President, Ritter and, by implication, every US foreign policy disaster from Vietnam to Somalia, to the dustbin of history.

By casting the elderly Donald Moffat as the President, and giving him some cynical new dialogue, the film-makers explicitly signal that he belongs to the past, to the Reagan-Bush era. Casting a younger, Clinton-esque character actor would have been far more courageous because it would have suggested that the abuse of executive power was an on-going danger on Capitol Hill. As it is, Ryan is complacently presented as the first sweep of a new broom on a corrupt old era. "Truth needs a soldier," the limp publicity tag puts it – which is about as accurate a summing-up of Clancy's novel as "Truth needs a sailor" would be of *Moby Dick*.

Tom Tunney



Executive stress: Harrison Ford

Color of Night

USA 1994

Director: Richard Rush

Certificate
18
Distributor
Guild
Production Company
Cinergi Pictures
Entertainment
Executive Producer
Andrew G. Vajna
Producers
David Matalon
Buzz Feitshans
Co-producers
David Willis
Carmine Zozzora
Production Supervisor
Steve Lionetti
Production Co-ordinators
Melissa Cooper
Jennifer Good
Unit Production Manager
John Wilson
Location Manager
Barry Gremillion
Assistant Directors
Jack Frost Sanders
Carla McCloskey
2nd Unit:
Tommie O'Sullivan
Matthew Dunne
Vicki LeMay
Costing
Wendy Kurtzman
Additional:
Jill Greenberg
Screenplay
Matthew Chapman
Billy Ray
Story
Billy Ray
Script Supervisor
Barbara Thaxton
Director of Photography
Dietrich Lohmann
2nd Unit Photography
John Connor
George Mooradian
Underwater Photography
Pete Romano
Camera Operators
Tony Gaudioz
2nd Unit:
Steve Shank
Russ McElhatton
Visual Effects:
John V. Fante
Steadicam Operator
Elizabeth Ziegler
Video/Computer Supervisor
Liz Radley
Special Visual Effects
Digital Domain
Producer:
Jil-Sheree Bergin
Co-ordinator:
Cari Thomas
Editor:
Robert Wait
Technical Directors:
Dan Janowski
Gray Marshall
Terrance Masson
CG Supervisor
Mark Lasoff
CG Manager
Barbara McCullough
Digital Supervisor
Price Pethel
Digital Artists
Lisa Aycock
Michael Kanfer
Candace Lewis
Dan Janowski
Gray Marshall
Terrance Masson
Editor
Jack Hofstra
Production Designer
James L. Schoppe
Supervising Art Director
Gary A. Lee
Art Director
Jack Morrissey
Set Design
Sydney Z. Litwack
Set Decorator
Cynthia McCormac

Set Dressers
Vito San Filippo
Ken Abraham
Joanne Gilliam
Max Brehme
Taylor Black
Sculptures
Mitch Devane
Puppeteer
Howard Berger
Special Effects Co-ordinator
Terry King
Special Effects
Gerry Elmdorf
Peter Albiez
Costume Design
Jacki Arthur
Wardrobe Supervisor
Victoria de Kay
Make-up
Design:
Michele Burke
Artists:
John Blake
Mike Mills
Carrie Angland
Jeremy Swan
Body:
Kaori Turner
Hair
Design:
Michael White
Stylists:
Jeri Baker
Lynda Gurasich
Title Design
Dan Perri
Titles/Opticals
Mercer Title & Optical
Effects
Music
Dominic Frontiere
Music performed by
National Philharmonic
Orchestra of London
Music Conductor
Dominic Frontiere
Orcheestrations
Dennis Dreith
Eddie Karam
Music Supervisors
Barry Levine
Eric Harryman
Music Editor
Robin Katz
Songs/Music Extracts
"The Color of the Night" by Jud J. Friedman, Lauren Christy, Dominic Frontiere, performed by (1) Lauren Christy, (2) Brian McKnight; "Just to See You" by Eric Lowen, Dan Navarro, performed by Lowen and Navarro; "Rain" by Lauren Christy, Gary Clark, performed by Lauren Christy; "Rose's Theme" by Dominic Frontiere, performed by Jonathan Dane; "Body" by and performed by Brent Woods, Ted Silbert
Sound Design
Soundelux
Supervising Sound Editors
Mark P. Stoecinger
Trevor Jolly
Dialogue Editors
Dino DiMuro
Sarah Rothenberg
Goldsmith
Mark R. LaPointe
Vic Radulich
Michael Szackmeister
ADR Supervision
Jeff Watts
ADR Editors
Souky Fontelieu
Lu Kleinman
Constance A. Kazmer
Laura Graham

Foley Editor
Christine Danelski
Sound Mixer
David Kelson
ADR Mixers
Doc Kane
Bob Deschaine
Jeff Courtie
Foley Mixers
Jim Ashwill
Nerses Gezalyan
Sound Re-recordists
Chris Jenkins
Mark Smith
Scott Ganary
Sound Effects Editors
Christopher Assells
Simon Coke
Scott Martin Gershin
Philip A. Hess
Mark A. Lanza
Glenn T. Morgan
Frank Smathers
Foley Artists
Gerry Hecker
John Cucci
John O'Connell
Sound Consultants
Emile Razpopov
Dessie Markovsky
Technical Adviser
Chuck Bail

Cast
Bruce Willis
Bill Capa
Jane March
Rose
Ruben Blades
Martinez

Lesley Ann Warren
Sondra Dorio
Scott Bakula
Bob Moore
Lance Henriksen
Buck
Brad Dourif
Clark
Kevin J. O'Connor
Casey
Andrew Lowery
Dale
Eriq La Salle
Anderson
Jeff Corey
Ashland
Kathleen Wilhoite
Michelle
Shirley Knight
Edith Niedelmeyer
John T. Bower
Medical Examiner
Avi Korein
Bouncer
Steven R. Barnett
Cop
Roberta Storm
Receptionist

11,029 feet
83 minutes

Dolby stereo
In colour
Prints by
Technicolor

Struck with traumatic colour blindness after the suicide of a patient, New York psychologist Bill Capa visits his friend Bob Moore, also an analyst, in Los Angeles. Bob introduces Bill to his Monday night therapy group: promiscuous rich Sondra, obsessive lawyer Clark, grief-stricken ex-cop Buck, masochistic artist Casey and gender-confused teenager Richie. Bob, who has been receiving death threats and thinks one of the group is responsible, is stabbed to death. Bill is asked by Martinez, the cop on the case, to continue with the Monday group, which he reluctantly does.

Through a car accident, Bill meets Rose, a mysterious young woman with whom he begins a passionate affair. Bill is warned off by Dale, Richie's protective elder brother. A red car tries to force Bill off the road. Rose, who is Sondra's best friend in another identity, is interrupted in her seduction of Sondra by Bill's arrival, and has to escape before he realises her personality split. Casey is murdered in his studio and his paintings of a model he has talked about in therapy are mutilated. Bill discovers the body and retrieves a face from the fire, recognising Rose. Sondra, Clark and Buck all recognise a picture of Rose, who was also Bob's girlfriend, as 'Bonnie', a woman who has come into each of their lives with a personality that exactly fulfils their fantasies.

Looking up the widow of Richie's former therapist, Bill learns the dead man molested the boy and that Richie committed suicide. Bill goes to Dale's foundry and finds 'Richie' (actually Rose) nailed to a chair. Rose, who has a compulsion to be what people want her to be, took on her brother's personality to please Dale, who has committed the murders to keep Rose's Richie personality in place. Dale attacks Bill with a nailgun. Martinez intervenes

and is stapled to a wall. Dale is killed by Rose, whom Bill talks out of suicide.

An entry in the currently-developing 'erotic thriller' stakes, *Color of Night* might, with a few more murders, have done as a scenario for one of the imitation Dario Argento gialli of the early 70s (*Black Belly of the Tarantula*, *Seven Dead in the Cat's Eye*). Yet its mangling of psychology and sleaze harks back to the deliriously silly post-*Psycho* thrillers made by William Castle in the early 60s. There are precedents for the multiple role Jane March plays here, but the film-makers should have noted how few were successful (Castle's *Homicidal* comes close).

Terrible as the toothy March is in any of her incarnations, it is hard to think of anyone who could have got away with the part. However, Bruce Willis, screwing up his eyes to simulate the colour blindness that never becomes relevant to the plot, has no excuse. In his latest bizarre career choice, Willis gamely goes along with every fresh absurdity, traipsing between head-scratching confrontation of a mystery everyone will penetrate as soon as they see Richie's false teeth, and explicit but ridiculous sex scenes (*someone's* willy bobs underwater, but it's more likely to belong to a body double).

Almost as if the film-makers wanted to set off a ratings controversy, the script checks off as much 'offensive' matter as possible, from the saxophone-scored sex, degrees steamier than *Basic Instinct*, to the extensive use of a nailgun in the finale, complete with close-ups of Ruben Blades' hands being pinned to the wall. It's sad that the erratic and unprolific Richard Rush, who hasn't made a film since *The Stunt Man* in 1980 (although he did all the pre-production on *Air America*), should commit his undeniable talents to such an obviously dodgy project. Nevertheless, Rush's psycho-baroque touches and a sterling supporting cast manage to make the whole mass consistently gigglesome, and it might be charitable to assume that Willis and March are also sending themselves up.

The suspects are so well-cast that the mystery angle is blown out altogether: even if you don't recognise March as Richie, you wonder why the part isn't played by as high-profile a character maniac as the rest of the Monday group. Lesley Ann Warren is an alluringly brittle nymphomaniac; Brad Dourif is the compleat anal obsessive (his obsession with numbers conveniently doesn't extend to memorising the car number-plate which would have solved the case); and Lance Henriksen is the brooding animal, cringing at every thundercrash. Even such bit-part nutcases as Kathleen Wilhoite, whose first-reel suicide sets off Willis' traumas, and Shirley Knight, as the abusive shrink's hysterical widow, limn their specific neuroses with high style. A sure bet for many Worst of the Year lists, this wholly terrible movie is far more enjoyable and astonishing than many halfway good ones.

Kim Newman

Cronos

Mexico 1992

Director: Guillermo del Toro

Certificate
18
Distributor
Metro Tartan
Production Company
October Films/Consejo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes/Instituto Mexicano de Cinematografía/Grupo del Toro/Guillermo Springall
Carum/Arturo Whaley
Martinez/Servicos Filmicos Atile/Larson
Sound Center/STPC de la RM presents
An Iguana production
In association with Ventana Films
Fondo de Formento a la Calidad
Cinematográfica
With financial assistance from Universidad de Guadalajara
Producers
Bertha Navarro
Arthur H. Gorson
Co-producer
Alejandro Springall
Bernard L. Nussbaumer
Associate Producer
Rafael Cruz
Jorge Sánchez
Julio Solorzano Foppa
Production Administrator
Lourdes Pérez Nido
Production Co-ordinators
Sachiko Uzeta
Yvette Brestyansky
Sunil Perkash
Location Manager
Pablo Buelna
Assistant Directors
Sebastián Silva
Joaquín Silva
Andrés Ortega
Screenplay
Guillermo del Toro
Continuity
Mariana Gironella
Valentina Leduc
Director of Photography
Guillermo Navarro
Graphics
Ria Lewerke
Editor
Raul Davalos
Associate Editor
Paul O'Bryan
Production Designer
Tolita Figueroa
Art Director
Brigitte Broch
Art Designer
Maria Figueroa
Art Co-ordinator
Terry Fernandez
Sculptures
Alberto Salcedo
Francisco Bernal
Jaime Sandoval
Carlos Espinosa
Cronos Device
designed by:
Exterior:
José Fors
Rubén Rivera
Interior:
Guillermo del Toro
Jamie Sandoval
Francisco Bernal
Mechanical Workings:
Ruben Rivera
Guillermo Newton
Construction
Supervisor:
Rigoberto Mora
Insect Design:
José Fors
Guillermo Newton
Guillermo del Toro
Jewellers:
Jaime Bizarro

Juan Ascencio
Arcangel Sculpture:
Jaime de Anda
Finishes:
Micaela Osmick
Lourdes Estrada
Ana Acevedo
Diary Design:
Felipe Ehrenberg
Special Decoration:
Carlos Clausell
Special Effects
Laurencio Cordero
Costumes
Genoveva Petitpierre
Wardrobe Supervisor
Federico Castillo
Make-up
M. Carrajal
Julietta Napoles
Special Make-up Effects
Necropia
Hairstylist
Julietta Napoles
Titles/Opticals
Mercer Titles/
Optical Effects Ltd
Music
Javier Alvarez
Music Producer
Ian Dearden
Music Supervisor
Steven Soles
Music Editor
Kevin Kern
Songs/Music Extracts
"Die schöne Müllerin"
by Franz Schubert;
"Caminemos" by
Herivelto Martins,
Ernesto Cortázar;
"Pelanca" by G. del
Toro, A. Springall,
J. Álvarez; "Eloisa"
by Javier Álvarez
Choreography
Esther Soler
Sound
Fernando Camara
Supervising Sound Editor
Burton M. Weinstein
Sound Manager
Matthias Ehrenberg
Sound Supervisors
Claudia Becker
Marissa Iglesias
Sound Editors
Thomas Burke
André Caporaso
Clark Conrad
Joseph Carey
Gary Gelfand
Stephan Grubbs
Michael Gutierrez
Philip Jamtaas
Joseph A. Johnston
Lloyd Kaiser
John Kincaide
Todd Niesen
Eric Norris
Craig Otte
Randal Thomas
Dubbing
Miguel de Luna
Nerio Barberis
Dubbing Mixer
John F. Reiner
Foley Artists
Dean P. Minneddy
Robert Muchnicki
Foley Mixer
Paul Aronoff
Sound Re-recordists
David E. Fluhr
George R. Grooves
John B. Asman
Stunt Co-ordinator
Gerardo Moreno

Cast
Federico Luppi
Jesús Gris
Ron Perlman
Angel de la Guardia
Claudio Brook
Dieter de la Guardia
Margarita Isabel
Mercedes Gris

Tamara Shanath
Aurora Gris
Daniel Giménez Cacho
Tito
Mario Iván Martínez
Alchemist
Juan Carlos Cumbro
Funeral Director
Fernando de Bernal
Manuelito
Luis Rodríguez
Buyer
Javier Álvarez
Bleeding Man
Gerardo Moscoso
Drunk
Eugenio Lobo
Stoned Man
Adriana Olivera
Clementina Rojas
Zinia Salgado

Luis de Icaza
Jorge Bolada
Ignacio Raiz Oviedo
Tango Students
Francisco Sánchez
Mimo
Laurencio Cordero
Watchman
Jorge Martínez de Hoyos
Narrator

8,302 feet
92 minutes

Dolby stereo
In colour

Subtitles

● An alchemist escapes from late medieval Europe for colonial New Spain, where he becomes watchmaker to the Viceroy. He invents a timepiece, the 'Cronos device'. In the 1930s his dead body is found buried under the rubble of his basement, following an earthquake that shook Mexico City. In his mansion a body hangs bleeding, producing the food necessary to feed the alchemist's hunger in exchange for time and youth.

Present-day Mexico City: the device is found inside one of many statuettes of angels bought and sold by the antique dealer Jesús Gris. On being held by Jesús, the jewelled golden case articulates mechanical insect-like legs and digs them into his hand. Meanwhile, Dieter, a dying industrialist in possession of the alchemist's diaries, is searching for the device for his own ends. His agents have bought him news of the antique dealer's collection of statuettes and he sends his nephew Angel de la Guardia to investigate.

Jesús has developed an itchy wound on his hand, inflicted by the device, and an unending thirst. The device winds itself up on his blood, feeding a living organism that inhabits it. He hides it inside his grand-daughter Aurora's teddy-bear. The next morning Jesús shaves off his moustache, feeling massively rejuvenated. But the shop has been broken into by Angel de la Guardia in his unsuccessful search for the device. Jesús follows him back to the industrialist's vault. Dieter shows Jesús the alchemist's diaries and warns him of the dangers of the device.

De la Guardia eventually catches up with Jesús, now hungering for human blood. The antique dealer refuses to tell him the whereabouts of the device so he pushes Jesús over a cliff inside a car. Jesús dies, but resurrects in the mortuary where his body is being patched up for the funeral service. Now undead, he escapes and wanders the city streets. He returns to the vault with Aurora, where he peels off his grey skin; underneath he is white. To add colour to his complexion he will need human blood, the industrialist informs him before he dies in the ensuing struggle. Jesús drinks the industrialist's blood but realises that he wants his grand-daughter's too. He throws himself from a rooftop with Angel de la Guardia, who dies in the fall. With the assistance of the Cronos device, Jesús survives, but smashes it and back

at home with his wife and grandchild, he sacrifices himself by giving himself up to the light.

● Turning away from the erotics of vampiric desire, *Cronos* rather surveys need, a banal thirst for blood which reaches its extraordinary climax with Jesús licking up blood from the floor of a men's toilet on New Year's Eve. "I am Jesús Gris," he announces. The names have to be translated for this film to really work for an English-speaking public: "I am Grey Jesus." *Cronos* tells the story of how the main character comes to embody his name, and die (so that she - Jesús's grand-daughter Aurora - may live). It is a film about the ruin of Jesús's body.

The young Mexican director Guillermo del Toro has insisted on how important Catholicism is to his story of ordinary vampirism (addiction). Thus, rather than merely falling into sentimentalism, the end of *Cronos* arguably remains faithful to the structure of the plot on which it is modelled - the death and resurrection of Christ - revealing the melodramatic dimension of the central story of Christian religion. The twist in the tale is that the symbolically cannibalistic relationship to Christ practised in Catholic liturgy is here pressed into the service of del Toro's film about a now vampiric Jesús (is vampirism to cannibalism what soup is to the main meal?). In this sense, del Toro's 'copy' interestingly transforms our relationship to the 'original'.

The connections between cinema and religion are well-known, but rarely have they been presented so pointedly in film - although this has always been an important dimension of the vampire genre, most recently in Coppola's version of *Bram Stoker's Dracula*. This is where the character of the young Aurora becomes so important, and not merely as a symbol of future hope or the object of Jesús' desire. Aurora is an onlooker: she stands by, witnessing the action of the film and the transformation of her grandfather. More than anything else, Aurora looks on, mesmerised and hardly comprehending what she sees. From this point of view, she stands in for the viewer, infantilising his or her gaze. And as a potential 'blood donor', she also represents the colour - red - that Jesús's white body lacks: when he finally dies, and gives

himself up to the light, his white skin is confused with the screen with which the film ends. If Jesús represents religion, Aurora might represent the cinema - and its most important colour, as both Godard and Polanski know very well. From the point of view of *Cronos*, and vampire films in general, film is essentially red and white, not black and white. It is this aspect of the cinematic experience - childish and religious - that cultural critics like Adorno warned against (and which film-makers like Spielberg market).

As is evident, like many contemporary films, *Cronos* is a film about film. It also, however, tells a movingly simple story about ageing, the yearning for more time, the fragility of the body and addiction. It quotes Cronenberg's study of addiction, *Videodrome* - as Jesús inserts his hand under his grey skin before peeling it off - but its slightly lighter, humorous tone for some reason recalls another film about obsession, Patrice Leconte's *The Hairdresser's Husband*. The film's simple story line and slowed-down pace already distance it from the production values of conventional genre movies: it feels like an art-house film. More important, however, is the melancholic humour which Federico Luppi, who plays Jesús, displays towards this obsession with youth. In *Cronos*, however, this humour is eventually pushed to macabre extremes as the now resurrected Jesús, dressed up for his funeral, wanders the city streets with his black suit, white shirt and tie on back-to-front - as if his head had been twisted around (perhaps by Aurora) one hundred and eighty degrees: Jesús, un-dead and fragile, becomes a scruffy doll.

In this sense, *Cronos* remains a genre film, and like most vampire and horror movies from the American continent, it exhibits both the concerns of a post-colonial present unreconciled with the past (has the Cronos device been made from Aztec gold melted down by the Conquistadors? Is it Aztec sacrifice rather than Catholic ritual that makes its claim on Jesús?) and the perceived fragility of the body in a technologically changing world in which the machine-human interface is seen as increasingly blurred. The Cronos device is some kind of pre-industrial cyborg experiment gone horribly wrong.

John Kraniauskas



The hours and times: Federico Luppi

Dazed and Confused

USA 1993

Director: Richard Linklater

Certificate
18
Distributor
Feature Film Company
Production Company
Universal
Pictures/Gramercy
Pictures present
An Alphaville
production
In association with
Detour Filmproduction
Producers
James Jacks
Sean Daniel
Richard Linklater
Co-producer
Anne Walker-McBay
Production Co-ordinator
Holly Gent
Production Manager
Alma Kuttruff
Location Manager
Tim Leary Swan
Post-production
Supervisor
Terra Mair-Abrams
Assistant Directors
John Cameron
Sarah Addington
Vincent N. Palmo Jnr
Casting
Don Phillips
ADR Voice:
Lipstick
NY:
De De Wehle
Screenplay
Richard Linklater
Script Supervisor
Catherine Jelski
Director of Photography
Lee Daniel
2nd Unit Director
of Photography
Layton Blaylock
Additional Camera
Operator
Ralph Watson
Editor
Sandra Adair
Production Designer
John Frick
Art Director
Jenny C. Patrick
Set Decorator
Deborah Pastor
Storyboard Artist
Mark Lambert Bristol
Costume Design
Katherine (K.D.) Dover
Costume Supervisor
Isabelle Coulet
Make-up Artist
Jean Black
Hair stylist
Sally Harper
Bob Harper
Titles/Opticals
Pacific Title
Music Supervisor
Harry Garfield
Music Editors
Jeffrey Charbonneau
Eeda Kitto
Songs
"Sweet Emotion"
by Steve Taylor, Tom
Hamilton, performed
by Aerosmith;
"School's Out", "No
More Mr Nice Guy" by
Alice Cooper, Michael
Bruce, performed by
Alice Cooper; "Why
Can't We Be Friends",
"Low Rider" by Jerry
Goldstein, Harold
Brown, "Papa" by Dee
Allen, B. B. Dickerson,
Howard Scott, Lonnie
Jordan, Lee Oskar,
Charles Miller,
performed by War;
"Free Ride" by Dan

Hartman, performed
by Edgar Winter; "Do
You Feel Like We Do"
by John Siomos, Peter
Frampton, Rick Wills,
Mick Gallagher, "Show
Me the Way" by Peter
Frampton, performed
by Peter Frampton;
"Hurricane" by Bob
Dylan, Jacque Levy,
performed by Bob
Dylan; "Love Hurts"
by Boudleaux Bryant,
performed by
Nazareth; "Fox on
the Run" by Brian
Connolly, Steve Priest,
Andy Scott, Mike
Tucker, performed
by Sweet; "Tush",
"Balinese" by Billy
Gibbons, Frank Beard,
Dusty Hill, performed
by ZZ Top; "Slow Ride"
by Dave Peeverett,
"I Just Want to Make
Love to You" by Willie
Dixon, performed by
Foghat; "Highway Star"
by Ritchie Blackmore,
Ian Paice, Jon Lord, Ian
Gillan, Roger Glover,
performed by Deep
Purple; "Jim Dandy" by
Linclyn Chase, "Lord
Have Mercy on My
Soul" by Jim Mangrum,
Harvey Jett, performed
by Black Oak Arkansas;
by and performed
by Alice Cooper;
"Stranglehold" by
Ted Nugent, "Hey
Baby" by Derek St
Holmes, performed
by Ted Nugent;
"Paranoid" by
Anthony Iommi,
William Ward,
Terrance Butler, John
Osborne, performed
by Black Sabbath;
"There's Never Been
Any Reason" by Mike
Somerville, performed
by Head East; "Rock
& Roll Hoochie Koo"
by and performed by
Rick Derringer; "Right
Place, Wrong Time"
by Malcolm J.
Rebennack, performed
by Dr John; "Summer
Breeze" by and
performed by Seals
& Crofts; "Rock & Roll
All Nite" by Gene
Simmons, Paul Stanley,
performed by Kiss;
"Livin' in the USA"
by and performed by
Steve Miller; "Cherry
Bomb" by Joan Jett,
Kim Fowley, performed
by The Runaways;
"Tuesday's Gone"
by Allen Collins,
Ronnie Van Zant,
performed by Lynyrd
Skynyrd; "Cowboy
Song" by Philip Lynott,
Brian Downey,
performed by Thin
Lizzy
Supervising Sound Editors
Val Kuklowsky
Sandy Gendler
Sound Editors
Clayton Collins
Lily Diamond
John Kwiatkowski
Mikael Sandgren
Ben Wilkens
Petra Von Delfenn

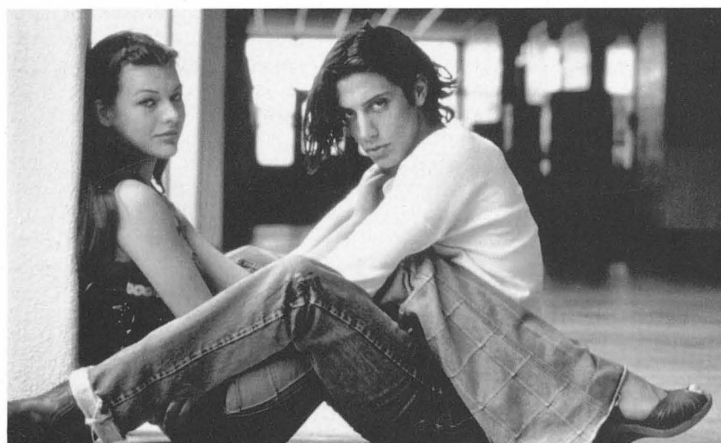
Sound Mixer
Jennifer McCauley
ADR Mixer
Jeff Courtie
ADR Recordist
Evelyn Hokanson
Foley Mixer
Mary Jo Lang
Foley Recordist
Roberta Alstadter
Supervising Sound Re-
recordist
Michael C. Casper
Sound Re-recording
Charlie Ajar Jr
Mixer:
Daniel Leahy
Foley Artists
John B. Roesch
Alicia Stevenson
Stunt Co-ordinator
Fred Lerner

Cast
Jason London
Pink
Joey Lauren Adams
Simone
Milla Jovovich
Michelle
Shawn Andrews
Pickford
Rory Cochrane
Slater
Adam Goldberg
Mike
Anthony Rapp
Tony
Sasha Jensen
Don
Marissa Ribisi
Cynthia
Deena Martin
Shavonne
Michelle Burke
Jodi
Cole Hauser
Benny
Christine Harnos
Kaye
Wiley Wiggins
Mitch
Mark Vandermeulen
Tommy
Esteban Powell
Carl
Jeremy Fox
Hirschfelder
Ben Affleck
O'Bannon
Jason O. Smith
Melvin
Christin Hinojosa
Sabrina

Parker Posey
Darla
Matthew McConaughey
Wooderson
Catherine Morris
Julie
Nicky Katt
Clint
Parker Brooks
Stoner
Zach Taylor
Jacob Jones
Freshman Smartasses
Rick Moser
Assistant Coach
Terry G. Wross
Coach Conrad
Kim Arnette Krizan
Ms Stroud
Zooey Grief
Pentico
Julius Tennon
Mr Payne
Priscilla Kinser
Erika Gerdimer
Heidi Cole Trenbath
Freshman Girls
Katherine Asher
Carl's Mom
Kathleen Cunningham
Pickford's Mom
Richard Dillard
Pickford's Dad
John Swasey
Beer Delivery Guy
Zeke Mills
Old Timer
Michael Gillespie
Party Guy
Tom Hoek
Chaperone
Fred Lerner
Guy with Pistol
David Blackwell
Liquor Store Clerk
Autumn Barr
Stacy
Doug Taylor
Bob Moser
Cops
Mona Lee Fultz
Mitch's Mother

9,162 feet
102 minutes

Dolby stereo
In colour
DeLuxe



Kids in the hall: Milla Jovovich, Shawn Andrews

when the host's parents find out what he had planned and decide to postpone their holiday. Mitch hangs out at the pool hall, buys beer for the first time, gets in scrapes with Don and Pink, and catches the eye of one of his sister's social circle. With some of his younger friends, he also engineers O'Bannon's humiliation by covering him in paint. Suave older guy Wooderson arrives in a flash car, announces a 'beer bust' out at the point, and sets his cap at Tony's red-headed, intellectual friend Cynthia.

At the point, Sabrina and Tony's friendship deepens; Tony's uptight friend Mike gets into a fight with a vicious greaser; Mitch drinks, smokes marijuana with the school's stoner/philosopher Slater and gets driven home, with a romantic stop-over in a field, by his sister's friend; Pink is pressurised by his team-mates to sign the pledge. He gets kissed by Jodi, but leaves with his official girlfriend Simone and a stoner posse including Slater, Don and Wooderson, to watch the sun rise on the football field. They are apprehended, and when Pink's football coach tells him he is mixing with the wrong crowd, he crumples up the pledge and throws it away. Mitch too is apprehended by his mother, but manages to convince her he has done nothing wrong.

As if knowing that the zeitgeist baton he picked up with his first film *Slacker* would be carried off by those less nimble of intellect (mentioning no names, but see *Reality Bites*), Richard Linklater has taken a step back in time. But this vibrantly laid-back comedy of mid-70s high school manners is also a massive step forward. It might not have a plot, but it certainly has a story, and *Slacker's* conveyor belt of kooky mid-twenties ne'er-do-wells has given way to a tightly bound ensemble of funny and believable adolescents: imagine an early John Hughes film shifted half a decade back to the pre-Reagan era and remade by a human being.

The high school characters in *Dazed and Confused* are just as inclined towards philosophical reflection – feminist analyses of *Gilligan's Island*, stoner's meditations on the probability of George Washington being a big dope smoker – as their elder forebears in *Slacker*, but the fact that they actually

are at a crossroads instead of merely perceiving themselves to be at one gives their musing much-needed momentum. Summer heat seeps from the screen, ambition goes up in a gentle haze of marijuana smoke and the film swaggers and lollops along to the beat of a supremely cheesy 70s rock soundtrack – Black Sabbath's 'Paranoid' has never sounded so jaunty.

This is no mere nostalgia trip. Linklater refuses to romanticise adolescent cruelty – the camera does not flinch from the bullying, and lingers on a couple of bat-thwacking incidents to unsettling effect – but shows rare perception in dealing with the nuts and bolts of teenage power negotiation. Watching this film in an American cinema, the waves of recognition were almost oppressive; on the other hand, the film seemed to make a British preview audience slightly nervous, as if wanting to remember things this way but not quite being able to. US film-makers can hardly be accused of neglecting adolescence, but few if any have previously approached it with the winning blend of knowingness and innocence with which Linklater here reclaims teen knowledge (the girls get to drink and drive and smoke drugs too) from the exploitative clutches of post-*Animal House* first-fuck cinema.

In this endeavour he is aided by a charismatic cast, notably Wiley Wiggins as the cheeky young tyke Mitch and Matthew McConaughey as the hilariously predatory Wooderson. And if Pink's central dilemma – whether to be the handsome football hero with all the girls after him or the handsome free-thinking waster with all the girls after him – will not strike a chord with everyone, his ability to see himself as the centre of all human drama ('If I ever start referring to these as the best days of my life, remind me to kill myself') might be more recognisable.

Dazed and Confused has the odd flash of ironic hindsight, for example in Cynthia's alternate decade theory – 'Everyone knows the 70s suck, so maybe the 80s will be radical' – but it is mercifully free of that 'and then I grew up to become a film-maker' feeling that scars so many cinematic insights into adolescence. Few of these people are going anywhere, but they are not going anywhere with style and dignity.

Ben Thompson

Faust

Czech Republic/France 1994

Director: Jan Svankmajer

Certificate
PG
Distributor
ICA
Production Company
Heart of Europe Prague
K Productions/Lumen
Films/an Athenor
Production
In association with
Pandora Film
(Frankfurt)/BBC Bristol
Koninck Film
With financial support
from The French
Ministry of Culture
and Communication
The State Foundation
of the Czech Republic
for the Support and
Development of Czech
Cinematography
Executive Producers
Karl Baumgartner
Keith Griffiths
Michael Havas
Hengameh Panahi
BBC:
Colin Rose
Producer
Jaromir Kallista
Script
Jan Svankmajer
Based on Faust plays
by Johann Wolfgang
Goethe, Christian
Dietrich Grabbe,
Christopher Marlowe,
Czech Folk Puppeteers

Text Adviser
Jiri Strach
Dialogue
English version:
George Roubicek
Director of Photography
Svatopluk Maly
Camera Operator
Frantisek Spilka
Animation
Bedrich Glaser
Martin Kublak
Ondrej Beranek
Editor
Marie Zemanova
English version:
Alan Brett
Art Director
Eva Svankmajerova
Jan Svankmajer
Set Decorators
Martin Kalous
Tomas Kalous
Milos Chlстина
Petr Bruna
Puppets and Props
Jiri Blaha
Zdenek Hlavacek
Jaromir Kryze
Karel Vanasek
Milan Kvak
Backgrounds:
Jiri Cihak
Costume Design
Ruzena Blahova
Make-up
Tomas Kuchta
Vaclav Frank

Eva Capkova
Jirina Bisingerova
Music Extracts
'Fugue' by Johann
Sebastian Bach;
'Faust et Marguerite'
by Charles Gounod
Choreography
Daria Vobornikova
Sound
Ivo Spalj
English Dialogue Director
Matt McCarthy
English Version
Dubbing Mixer
George Goulgham
Sound Effects
Petra Mach
Jaroslav Schreder
Karel Susmilch

Cast
Peter Copek
Faust
Stanislava Babicka
Lenka Havrankova
Magda Horejsova
Petra Hrstkova
Vera Masopustova
Dancers
Josef Podsednik
Jaroslava Zelenkova
Puppet Actors
Andrew Sachs
Voices (English Version)
Jan Kraus
Vladimir Kudla
Antonin Zacpal
Jiri Suchy
Viktorie Knotkova
Jana Mezlova
Miluse Strakova
Josef Fiala
Martin Radimecky
Ervin Tomendal
Frantisek Polata
Josef Chodora
Karel Vidimsky
Peter Meissel
Rudolf Ruzek
Milan Vyskocil
Pavel Marek
Dalibor Fencel
Robert Blanda
Michaela Tyllerova
Vendula Pecova
Berenika Strettiova
Zita Moravkova
Gillian Wood
Zuzana Drazilova
Karel Vild
Martin Kublak
Monika Chlustinova
Jiri Liska
Joseph Vedral
Vaclav Svankmajer
Pavel Valenta

8,550 feet
95 minutes

Dolby stereo
In colour

English version
Czech Title:
Lekce Faust

Prague, 1994. A businessman sees two men handing out leaflets containing a street map. At his flat, a chicken has roosted overnight; it escapes into the street where the two men capture it in a briefcase. The businessman finds an egg inside a loaf of bread; when opened, it unleashes a thunderstorm. Another copy of the map leads him to an ancient courtyard, where he sees a man running in panic from a doorway. Investigating, he finds a cellar full of costumes and stage furniture. Picking up a scorched copy of Goethe's *Faust*, he assumes the

title role, complete with wig and cloak.

As the opening curtain is signalled, 'Faust' finds himself in a theatre, a performance about to begin. Ripping off his costume, he breaks through the stage backdrop into a vault where an alchemist's laboratory is revealed; with the aid of a book of spells, he brings to life a clay child which grows horrifyingly into his own image before he smashes it. Warned by a marionette angel not to experiment further but encouraged by a demon to do as he pleases, he is sent by a wooden messenger to a café meeting with the two street-map men, identified as 'Cornelius' and 'Valdes', who give him a briefcase of magical devices. Returning to the vault, he uses them to summon Mephisto, offering Lucifer his soul in return for 24 years of self-indulgence.

At another café, 'Faust' is entertained by Cornelius and Valdes, who provide a fountain of wine from a table-top. He watches as a tramp, carrying a severed human leg, is pestered by a large black dog until he throws the limb into the river. 'Faust' finds a key in his food, uses it on a shop-front shutter, and is dragged back on stage by waiting stagehands. He mimes a scene from Gounod's opera, in which Mephisto returns and the pact with Lucifer is signed in blood. After the interval, 'Faust' visits Portugal to demonstrate his supernatural powers to the King; when a requested restaging of the David and Goliath contest is poorly received, he drowns the entire Portuguese court.

'Faust' is distracted from repentance by Helen of Troy, whom he seduces before realising she is a wooden demon in disguise. Lucifer arrives earlier than expected to claim his soul, and 'Faust' rushes in panic from the theatre, meeting a newcomer in the doorway as he bursts into the street. He is felled by a red car, and Cornelius and Valdes watch in amusement as a tramp carries away a severed leg from the scene of the accident. A policeman checks the car, but it is without a driver.

As Svankmajer's 'ordinary man', manipulated into perdition, becomes increasingly a masked and tethered marionette, his misadventures are interrupted at some length by the figure of Punch. Stridently bom-

bastic as ever, this intrusive clown carries a wealth of meanings, not least in reminding us that the Faust story has long been a favourite among puppeteers throughout the world and would have been known to Svankmajer since his earliest days as a student of puppetry at the Prague Academy. Punch's interventions serve much the same purpose as the 'clownage' scenes in the original *Faustbuch*, supposedly based on fact, which provided Marlowe with the basis for his play *Doctor Faustus* in 1588; these stand-up comedy routines, largely scorned by Marlowe but firmly incorporated in the well-padded 1616 version of the play (published after his death), offer an ironic comment on Faust's plight, as well as linking it to events of the period. As Svankmajer uses them, they form the equivalent partly of a Chorus, partly of a sorcerer's-apprentice parody, partly of an alter-ego for Faust himself.

When Punch first appears in the film, dithering over a book of magic he can make little sense of (finally despairing, he sits on it: "What poor brain cannot comprehend/May well go in the other end"), he seems to be speaking for the bewildered passer-by who finds himself cast in the Faustian role. During the visit to Portugal, however, when Punch raids the tea-table and stuffs cream cake into his mouth, he has become Faust's manservant, and it is he who rushes into the Prague streets at crisis time in search of guards to protect his master against the arrival of Lucifer. Ironically, it is the most tedious of the Punch scenes, in which he orders a demon to and fro until it is exhausted, that prepares the way for Faust's death. The demon escapes in a red car, which fatally reappears at the end.

Although the English-language version of his film quotes directly from Marlowe, Svankmajer has borrowed freely from other sources – including Goethe, Gounod and the more obscure Grabbe – to shape a narrative that is all his own. A cascade of improvisation springs from each borrowing, as when the ballerinas raking hay to Gounod's music pause for soup and a siesta and get ogled by a farmhand, or when a volley of tiny demons dismember the equally minuscule angels who are trying to prevent Faust from signing away

his soul. So much of it is Svankmajer, in fact, that the story of Faust only really gets started halfway through the film: the introductory scenes, in which the enigma of the map slowly exerts its fascination, provide a new and sinister dimension to the Marlovian characters of Valdes and Cornelius, who function like secret police, steering their victim to his doom with many a knowing nod.

One of them is played by Jan Kraus, who was the victorious diner in Svankmajer's previous film *Food* (in which two men, ignored by their waiter, consume the restaurant table and chairs before turning on each other). This link would seem jokingly deliberate were it not that so much of Svankmajer's work is about the process of eating. True to form, a series of unappetising snacks punctuates the drama of Faust, often with Valdes and Cornelius in attendance, their most unsettling complicity being accorded to the tramp who clearly regards Faust's mangled leg as a potential feast. And yet the hunger in Svankmajer's obsessive consumers is not so much for food itself as for destruction, a recycling of raw materials (as at the end of *Dimensions of Dialogue*, in which a succession of heads disintegrate while spewing out their own duplicates). Hoping to halt the process – "I seek the force," he says, "the reason governing life's flow" – Faust is eventually torn apart like all the rest.

Wandering like a somnambulist into an unforeseen obligation to act out the familiar legend, Svankmajer's contender derives little benefit from his bargain – which, given Mephisto's ingenious likeness, is actually with his own image. The promised tour of Heaven and Hell never materialises, there is not so much as a glimpse of the Seven Deadly Sins, and the trip to Portugal signally fails to amuse. It seems odd that Faust's demand to "live in all voluptuousness" remains unpursued until the cynically explicit coupling with a wooden Helen. There is an undoubted currency to the idea of an unending procession of Fausts, drawn off the street by curiosity and boredom to hand over their souls like mortgage payments in return for what they will never be permitted to enjoy; but it is disappointing that Svankmajer finally renders their quest so inconsequential, deflecting himself time and again into other rituals and amusements.

Which is not to say that his macabre humour has lost any of its usual alchemy. In one of his asides, the Golem materialises from a mound of clay inside a glass retort and grows at alarming speed until crushed by its creator; in another, fragments of clay scuttle off independently, sprouting eyeballs to help them on their way. Alongside Svankmajer's life-size puppets, and familiar surrealist images of neglect and decay, are appealing tricks like the egg that appears inside a loaf, and the tabletop fountain of wine. The authentic Faust in all this, one is tempted to conclude, has to be the film-maker himself.

Philip Strick

Forrest Gump

USA 1994

Director: Robert Zemeckis

Certificate
12

Distributor
United International Pictures

Production Company
Paramount Pictures

Producer

Wendy Finerman

Steve Tisch

Steve Starkey

Co-producer

Charles Newirth

Production Co-ordinator

Dana Williams

Unit Production Manager

Charles Newirth

Location Managers

Mary Morgan

Amy Ness

Peggy Pridemore

Post-production Supervisors

Rick Porras

Steven J. Boyd

2nd Unit Director

Steve Starkey

Assistant Directors

Bruce Moriarty

Cherylanne Martin

Dana Kuznetzkoff

David Venghaus Jr

Eric Tignini

Casting

Ellen Lewis

Screenplay

Eric Roth

Based on the novel

by Winston Groom

Script Supervisor

Susan Malerstein-Watkins

Director of Photography

Don Burgess

2nd Unit Director of Photography

David M. Dunlap

Additional:

Christopher Woods

E.J. Foerster

Optical Supervisor

Bruce Vecchitto

Special Effects

Industrial Light and Magic

Visual Effects Editor:

Timothy Eaton

Scanning Supervisor:

Josh Pines

Camera Operator:

Patrick Turner

Visual Effects Coordinators:

Anne Calanchini

Megan L. Jones

Electronic Effects Editor:

Dan McNamara

Digital Compositors:

Mark Holmes

Chad Taylor

Digital Matte Painters:

Eric Chauvin

Bill Mather

Craig Mullins

Yusei Uesugi

Optical Line Up:

Jennifer Lee

Tim Geideman

Optical Camera:

James C. Lim

Co-Visual Effects Editor:

Michael McGovern

Executive in Charge of Digital Effects:

Tom Williams

Director of Production Operations:

Jeff Mann

Executive in Charge of Production:

Patricia Blau

Camera Operator

Chris Squires

Special Photography Effects Producer

Debbie Denise

Special Visual Effects Supervisor

Ken Ralston

Graphics

Computer Graphics Supervisors:

George Murphy

Stephen Rosenbaum

Sequence Supervisor:

John Schlag

Computer Graphic Artists:

Jon Alexander

Leah Anton

Julie Adrianson-Neary

Kathleen Beeler

Michael Conte

Peter Daulton

Lisa Drostova

Scott Frankel

Carl N. Frederick

Howard Gersh

Bart Giovannetti

Rebecca Heskes

David Horsley

Sandy Houston

Greg Maloney

Robert Marinic

Mary McCulloch

Terry Molatore

Steve Molin

Patrick T. Myers

Kerry Nordquist

Eddie Pasquarello

Bob Patterson

Screenplay

Tom Rosseter

Alex Sedien

Linda Siegel

Brian Van't Hull

Editor

Arthur Schmidt

Production Designer

Rick Carter

Art Directors

Leslie McDonald

Jim Teegarden

Set Design

Erin Kemp

James C. Feng

Elizabeth Lapp

Lauren E. Polizzi

Set Decorator

Nancy Haigh

Set Dressers

William F. Alford

Edward J. McCarthy III

Frank M. Fleming

James P. Meehan

Mark Weissenflugh

Production Illustrators

Martin A. Kline

James Hegedus

Stefan Paul Dechant

Storyboard Artist

Eric Tiemens

Special Effects Supervisor

Allen Hall

Special Effects

Steven C. Foster

Ray O. Hardesty

Bruce E. Merlin

Matthew Hall

Christopher Lee Foster

Ozmandias

Forepersons:

Joe M. Montenegro

James L. Roberts

Illusion Wheelchair Design

Ricky Jay

Michael Webber

Costume Design

Joanna Johnston

Key:

Pamela Wise

Costume Supervisor

John Daniel Bronson

Costumes

Key:

Diana J. Wilson

Set:

Rudolph Eric Garcia

Patricia C. Beresi

Steve Shubin

Uniform:

Robert W. Numbers

Make-up Design

Daniel C. Striepeke

Hallie D'Amore



Devilled punch: Peter Cepek

Make-up

Jay Cannistraci
Rick Sharp
Hair Design
Judith A. Cory
Frida Aradottir
Hairstylists
Bill Kohout
Hazel Catmull
Susan Schuler-Page
Title Design
Nina Saxon Film
Department
Opticals
Pacific Title
Music
Alan Silvestri
Choral Music Director
Sally Stevens
Music Conductor
Alan Silvestri
Orchestrations
William Ross
Executive Music Producer
Joel Sill
Music Editor
Ken Karman
Music Co-ordinator
David Bifano
Songs/Music Extracts
"Lovesick Blues" by
Cliff Friend, Irving
Mills, performed
by Hank Williams;
"Hound Dog" by Jerry
Leiber, Mike Stoller;
"Rebel Rouser" by
Duane Eddy, Lee
Hazlewood, performed
by Duane Eddy;
"(I Don't Know Why)
But I Do" by Paul
Gayten, Robert Guldry,
performed by Clarence
"Frogman" Henry;
"Walk Right In" by
H. Woods, Gus Cannon,
Bill Svanoe, Eric
Darling, performed
by The Rooftop Singers;
"Sugar Shack" by Keith
McCormack, Fay Voss,
performed by Jimmy
Glimmer and the
Fireballs; "Paramount
Newsreel Music" by
Alessandro Cicognini,
Sammy Fain, Jay
Gorney, E.Y. Harburg,
Elsie Janis, Irving
Kahal, Jack King;
"Camelot" by Alan
Jay Lerner, Frederick
Loewe; "Pomp and
Circumstance" by
Sir Edward Elgar,
performed by Dresden
Philharmonic; "Hanky
Panky" by Jeff Barry,
Ellie Greenwich,
performed by Tommy
James & the Shondells;
"Blowin' in the Wind"
by Bob Dylan; "Land
of 1000 Dances" by
Chris Kenner;
"Fortunate Son"
by John Fogerty,
performed by
Creedence Clearwater
Revival; "I Can't Help
Myself (Sugar Pie
Honey Bunch)" by
Edward Holland,
Lamont Dozier, Brian
Holland, performed
by The Four Tops;
"Respect" by Otis
Redding, performed
by Aretha Franklin;
"Rainy Day Women #12
& 35" by and
performed by Bob
Dylan; "Sloop John B"
by Brian Wilson,
performed by The
Beach Boys; "California
Dreamin'" by John
Phillips, Michelle
Phillips, performed
by The Mamas and
the Papas; "For What
It's Worth" by Stephen
Stills, performed by
Buffalo Springfield;
"What the World
Needs Now is Love"
by Burt Bacharach,

Hal David, performed
by Jackie De Shannon;
"Webster's Boomer"
by David Frank; "Soul
Kitchen", "Hello,
I Love You", "People
Are Strange", "Love
Her Madly", "Break on
Through (To the
Other Side)" by and
performed by The
Doors; "Mrs Robinson"
by Paul Simon,
performed by
Simon & Garfunkel;
"Volunteers" by Marty
Balin, Paul Kantner,
performed by Jefferson
Airplane; "All Along
the Watchtower" by
Bob Dylan, "Hey Joe"
by Billy Roberts,
performed by The Jimi
Hendrix Experience;
"Where Have all the
Flowers Gone?" by
Pete Seeger; "Let's
Get Together" by Chet
Powers, performed
by The Youngbloods;
"San Francisco (Be
Sure to Wear Flowers
in your Hair)" by John
Phillips, performed
by Scott McKenzie;
"Turn! Turn! Turn!
(To Everything There
is a Season)" by Pete
Seeger, performed
by The Byrds;
"Aquarius" by James
Rado, Jerome Ragni,
Galt McDermott,
performed by The
Fifth Dimension;
"Joy to the World"
by Hoyt Axton,
performed by
Three Dog Night;
"Everybody's Talkin'"
by Fred Neil,
performed by Harry
Nilsson; "Silent Night"
arranged by Les Brown;
"Thanks for the
Memory" by Ralph
Rainger, Leo Robin;
"Stoned Love" by
Frank E. Wilson,
Yennik Samoit,
performed by The
Supremes; "Let's Work
Together" by Wilbert
Harrison, performed
by Canned Heat;
"Raindrops Keep
Falling on my Head"
by Burt Bacharach,
Hal David, performed
by B.J. Thomas; "Tie a
Yellow Ribbon 'Round
the Old Oak Tree"
by L. Russell Brown,
Irwin Levine,
performed by Tony
Orlando and Dawn;
"Jesus on the Mainline"
performed by Donny
Gerrad; "Mr President
(Have Pity on the
Working Man)" by and
performed by Randy
Newman; "Get Down
Tonight" by Harry
Wayne Casey, Richard
Finch, performed by
KC & the Sunshine
Band; "Plant Me Feet
on Higher Ground" by
Ruth E. Davis; "My
Rock" performed
by Oren Waters;
"I've Got a New
Home"; "Sweet Home
Alabama" by Ronnie
Van Zant, Ed King,
Gary Rossington, "Free
Bird" by Allen Collins,
Ronnie Van Zant,
performed by Lynrd
Skynyrd; "Running
on Empty" by and
performed by Jackson
Browne; "It Keeps you
Runnin'" by Michael
McDonald, performed
by The Doobie
Brothers; "I've

Got to Use my
Imagination" by Gerry
Goffin, Barry Goldberg,
performed by Gladys
Knight & the Pips;
"Go Your Own Way"
by Lindsey
Buckingham,
performed by
Fleetwood Mac;
"On the Road Again"
by and performed
by Willie Nelson;
"Against the Wind"
by Bob Seger,
performed by Bob
Seger & the Silver
Bullet Band
Choreographer
Leslie Cook
Sound Design
Randy Thom
Supervising Sound Editor
Gloria S. Borders
Dialogue Editors
Ewa Sztompke
Dianna Stirpe
Claire Sanfilippo
ADR Editor
Suzanne Fox
Foley Editor
Denise Thorpe
Tom Barwick
Foley Recordist
Tony Eckert
2nd Unit Sound Mixer
Jonathan S. Gaynor
Sound Re-recorder Mixers
Randy Thom
Tom Johnson
Dennis Sands
Sound Effects Editors
Robert Shoup
E. Larry Oatfield
ADR Loop Supervisor
Leigh French
Dialect Coach
Jessica Drake
Vocal Coach
Christiane Steffen
Technical Advisors
Captain Dale Dye
Stephen T. Perkins
Stunt Co-ordinator
Bud Davis
Cast
Tom Hanks
Forrest Gump
Robin Wright
Jenny Curran
Garry Sinise
Lieutenant Dan Taylor
Mykelti Williamson
Bubba Blue
Sally Field
Mrs Gump
Rebecca Williams
Nurse at Park Bench
Michael Conner Humphreys
Young Forrest
Harold Herthum
Doctor
George Kelly
Barber
Rob Penny
John Randall
Cronies
Sam Anderson
Principal
Margo Moorer
Louise
Ione M. Telech
Elderly Woman
Christine Seabrook
Elderly Woman's
Daughter
John Worsham
Southern Gentleman
Peter Dobson
Young Elvis Presley
Siobhan J. Fallon
School Bus Driver
Alexander Zemeckis
Logan Livingston Gomez
Ben Waddell
School Bus Boys
Elizabeth Hanks
School Bus Girl
Hann R. Hall
Young Jenny Curran
Tyler Long
Red Headed Boy
Christopher Jones
Boy with Cross
Grady Bowman
Fat Boy

Kevin Mangan
Jenny's Father
Fay Genens
Jenny's Grandmother
Frank Geyer
Police Chief
Rob Landry
Red Headed Teen
Jason McGuire
Fat Teen
Pete Auster
Teen with Cross
Sonny Shroyer
College Football Coach
Brett Rice
Ed Davis
High School Football
Coaches
Daniel Striepeke
Recruiter
Bruce Lucvia
Kick Off Return Player
David Brisbin
Newscaster
Kirk Ward
Earl
Angela Lomas
Timothy Record
Black Students
Deborah McTeer
Woman with Child
on Park Bench
Mark Matheisen
Jenny's Date
Al Harrington
Joe Washington
Nathalie Hendrix
Local Anchors
Jed Gillin
President Kennedy's
Voice
Bob Hanks
University Dean
Don Fischer
Army Recruiter
Kenneth Bevington
Army Bus Driver
Michael Flannery
Gary Robinson
Bus Recruits
Marlena Smalls
Bubba's Mother
Kitty K. Green
Bubba's Great
Grandmother
John Worsham
Landowner
Afemo Omilami
Drill Sergeant
Matt Wallace
Barracks Recruit
Dante McCarthy
Topless Girl
Paulie DiCocco
EmCee
Mike Jolly
Michael Kemmerling
John Voldstad
Jeffrey Winner
Club Patrons
Russ Wilson
Pick-up Truck Driver
Daniel J. Gillyooly
Helicopter Gunman
Calvin Gadsden
Sergeant Sims
Aaron Izbicki
Dallas
Michael Burgess
Cleveland
Steven Griffith
Tex
Bill Roberson
Fat Man on Bench
Michael McFall
Army Hospital
Male Nurse
Eric Underwood
Mail Call Soldier
Stephan Derelian
Byron Minns
Wounded Soldiers
Stephen Wesley
Bridgewater
Hospital Officer
Bonnie Ann Burgess
Army Nurse
Scott Oliver
Jack Bowden
National
Correspondents
John William Galt
President Johnson's
Voice
Hilary Chaplain
Hilary
Isabel Rose
Isabel

Jay Ross
Veteran at War Rally
Richard D'Alessandro
Abbie Hoffman
Dick Stilwell
Policeman at War Rally
Kevin Davis
Michael Jace
Black Panthers
Geoffrey Blake
Wesley
Tim Perry
Hippie at Commune
Venessa Roth
Emily Carey
Hollywood Boulevard
Girlfriends
Paul Raczkowski
Man in VW Bug
Valentino
Chinese Ping Pong
Player
Dick Cavett
Himself
Joe Stefanelli
John Lennon's Voice
Tiffany Salerno
Carla
Marla Sucharetza
Lenore
Aloysius Gigl
Musician Boyfriend
Joe Alaskey
President Nixon's Voice
Lazarus Jackson
Discharge Officer
W. Benson Terry
Stanley Loomis
Peter Bannon
Local Correspondent
Matt Rebenkof
Drugged Out Boyfriend
The Hallahujah Singers of
Beaufort South Carolina
Church Choir

Nora Dunfee
Elderly Southern
Woman
Hallie D'Amore
Waitress in Cafe
Jim Hanks
Running Double
Chiffonye Cobb
Juan Singleton
Bobby Richardson
Hannibal Reporters
Michael Mattison
Taxi Driver
Lenny Herb
Young Man Running
Charles Boswell
Ageing Hippie
Tim McNeil
Wild Eyed Man
Haley Joel Osment
Forrest Junior
Lonnie Hamilton
The Minister
Teresa Denton
Lieutenant Dan's
Fiancee
12,800 feet
142 minutes
Dolby stereo
In colour
Technicolor
Prints by
Print House
Anamorphic

hedonistic lifestyle of the 70s and is in a state of profound despair.

After Forrest's mother dies, he retires to Greenbow where one day Jenny shows up. They live together for a while, and have sex, but then Jenny runs off again. Forrest begins running incessantly around the country, picking up a cult of followers, then suddenly stops. Back in Greenbow, he receives a letter from Jenny, and goes to meet her, and finds that they have a son, Forrest Junior. The three of them all return to Greenbow and live happily until Jenny dies of an unspecified 'virus'. Forrest goes on to raise his son alone.

Southern-accented, intellectually-challenged and fixated on his wild-spirited quasi-sister, Forrest Gump is a distant, in-bred cousin to Benji in Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury*. Robert Zemeckis's film ambitiously spans 40 years of American history, but defeated by its own glibness, ends up signifying less about the times it describes than the back of a chewing gum wrapper.

The problem is that *Forrest Gump* wants to perform two opposing projects simultaneously. On the one hand, it strains at being a picaresque satire in the tradition of *Candide*, depicting the triumph of innocence in a corrupt world. Unfortunately, the necessity of irony for this project is fatal to its other goal, which is to tell a standard sentimental love story. Truly effective satire requires a more neutral narrator than offered here, like the holy idiot Chance in Hal Ashby's *Being There*, or the chameleon *Zelig*, so that he can be at least a little complicit with the forces of evil. With such a nauseatingly likeable protagonist, *Forrest Gump* can only bark at the darkness of its times (racism, war, etc.) without venturing to bite. Thus, despite its constant invocation of history, represented by clever retouching of archive footage, world events are never more than a flickering spectacle behind the unvarying constant that is Forrest.

In fact, having Tom Hanks, the personification of cuddliness, as its star, the closest *Forrest Gump* can come to satire is showing that Forrest's stupidity makes him the perfect soldier. In a rather misogynistic displacement, the character of Jenny becomes the vessel which carries all the 'nasty' habits of her generation, like drug abuse and promiscuity, so that Forrest can seem all the more unbesmirched in comparison. It is typical of the film's cack-handedness that it should kill her off with a mysterious virus that seems linked to her sordid past - thus maintaining topicality - but cop out of naming it as Aids, which would have cast too dark a shadow on the love story. This retributive treatment of the victim is oddly at variance with the banal morality of randomness espoused throughout, encapsulated in Forrest's mottoes, such as, "Life is like a box of chocolates - you never know what you're going to get."

Like his former mentor, and now



Age of innocence: Tom Hanks

rival in the blockbuster field, Steven Spielberg, director Robert Zemeckis is clearly in the process of redefining his image. After such features as *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* and the *Back to the Future* trilogy, big at the box office but short on major Academy awards outside the technical categories, Zemeckis has been attempting to up his quality-credibility. *Death Becomes Her* was a poor start, but *Forrest Gump* is just the sort of mushy, faintly liberal stuff the Academy likes. Yet despite its weaknesses, the film still demonstrates Zemeckis' finer strengths as a director. He has a sure touch for light comedy, and an especially strong sense of rhythm, beautifully interpreted by editor Arthur Schmidt.

With so much story to explicate and an intentionally chaotic perspective on world events, Zemeckis and Schmidt craft a strong sense of narrative coherence out of repetitive framings and neatly handled temporal shifts. Even more impressive is the use of special effects, for which Zemeckis has always been noted. In collaboration with Industrial Light and Magic, Zemeckis innovatively uses effects here to enhance the film's realism rather than to create the unbelievable. In addition to crowd scenes and the aforementioned archive treatments, computers seem to have been used to 'erase' Gary Sinise's calves in order to make a more convincing double amputee and make Tom Hanks look like a brilliant ping pong player. Sadly, ILM have not yet perfected the computer programme that can write better scripts.

Like its hero, *Forrest Gump* as a film runs around quickly, covers a lot of ground, but seems to have no particular destination. It's too specific to be a proper allegory, and too vague to provide a satisfactorily millennial perspective on the last 50 years. Neither is it caustic enough to make one cry, nor soppy enough to make one laugh. In the end, it is a feel-good movie for which it is hard to feel anything at all.

Leslie Felperin Sharman

Gettysburg

USA 1993

Director: Ronald F. Maxwell

Certificate

PG

Distributor

Mayfair Entertainment
Turner Pictures Inc
In association with
Tristar Television Inc

Presented by

Mace Neufeld
Robert Rehme

Producers

Robert Katz
Mocetsuma Esparza
Executives in Charge of Production

James Wilberger
Alicia Rivera Alon

Co-producer

Nick Lombardo

Associate Producer

Sandy Martin

Production Co-ordinator

Beth Hickman

Los Angeles Co-ordinator

Lori Haddox

Unit Production Manager

Graham Ford

Unit Manager

Cal Naylor

Location Manager

Dennis Kern

Location Co-ordinator

Ralph Kendall Berge

TNT Director of

Post production

Candace Snyder

Post-production

Supervisor

Zach Staenberg

2nd Unit Director

Steve M. Boyum

Assistant Directors

Skip Cosper

Karen Collins

Jay Smith

Chemen Ochoa

Jeff Kay

Richard Wright

2nd Unit:

Kaaren F. Ochoa

Casting

Joy Todd

ADR Voice:

Lynne Redding

Loop Du Jour

Screenplay

Ronald F. Maxwell

Based on the novel

The Killer Angels by

Michael Shaara

Script Supervisors

Dawn Dreiling

2nd Unit:

Wendy Dallas

Director of Photography

Kees Van Oostrum

2nd Unit Director of

Photography

Eddy Van Der Enden

B Camera Operators

Jon Herron

2nd Unit:

Chris Moseley

Additional:

Ron Vargas

Rafael Ortiz

Flycam Operators

Hans Der Bezemer

Jon Verhagen

Visual Effects

Illusion Arts

Editor

Corky Ehlers

Production Designer

Cary White

Art Director

Mike Sullivan

Set Decorator

Barbara Haberacht

Set Dressers

Tommy McCutcheon

Brian Steblinski

Michael Sabo

Tonatioh Esparza

Stephen G. Shifflette

Tim Car

Hap Weaver

Joseph E. Valley Jnr

Scenic Artist

Ed Vega

Storyboard Artists

Bot Roda

Michael Peal

Special Effects

Co ordinator

Matt Vogel

Special Effects Keys

Joel P. Blanchard

Richard Huggins

Dean Miller

Jeff Naparstek

Raymond Tasillo

Costume Design

Michael T. Boyd

Costume Supervisor

Stanley Moore

Make-up Supervisor

Allan Apone

Make-up Artists

Key:

Michael Spatola

Adam Brandy

Mark Sisson

Scott Taylor

2nd Unit:

Scott Taylor

Hairstylists

Key:

Gunnar Swanson

Hala Iqal

Katherine Rees

Main Title Sequence Design

Ronald F. Maxwell

Titles

Cinema Research

Corporation

Opticals

F-Stop

Music

Randy Edelman

Civil War Military Music

Performed by

The Camp Chase Fire

& Drum Band

2nd Maryland Fire

& Drum Band

The Americus Band

The Saxton's Cornet

Band

Orchestrations

Ralph Ferraro

Music Supervisor

David Franco

Music Editor

Joanie Diener

Associate Music/Film

Editor:

Joe Thygesen

Supervising Sound Editors

J. Stanley Johnston

Bruce Nazarian

Dialogue/ADR Editors

Chris Reeves

Richard Corwin

ADR Editor

Ernesto Mas

Sound Mixer

Stephen Halbert

2nd Unit:

Stuart Deutsch

Foley Mixer

Tom Gonta

Scoring Mixers

Dennis Sands

Elton Ahi

Dolby stereo

consultant

Steve F. B. Smith

Re-recording Mixers

Gerry Lentz

J. Stanley Johnston

Senior Sound Effects Editor

Scott Wolf

Sound Effects Editor

Scott Sanders

Foley Walkers

Ossama Khuluki

Catherine Harper

Historical Advisers

On set:

Brian Pohanka

Pat Falci

Historical Script Reviewers

Professor Gabor

S. Boritt

Lieutenant Colonel

Keith Gibson

A. Wilson Greene

Re-enactor Co-ordinators

Cheryl Russo

Marcia Paull

Yvonne Barton

Stunt Co-ordinator

Steve M. Boyum

Military Choreographer

Dale E. Fetzer Jnr

Head Wrangler

Doug Sloan

Wranglers

Billy Frank

Gary G. Frank

Mark Folks

G. Gary Mahas

C.J. Staats

Cast

Federals:

Jeff Daniels

Colonel Joshua

Lawrence Chamberlain

Sam Elliott

Brigadier General John

Buford

C. Thomas Howell

Lieutenant Thomas

D. Chamberlain

Kevin Conway

Sergeant "Buster"

Kilrain

Brian Mallon

Major General Winfield

Scott Hancock

Buck Taylor

Colonel William

Gamble

John Diehl

Private Bucklin

Josh Mauer

Colonel James C. Rice

John Rothman

Major General John F.

Reynolds

Richard Anderson

Major General George

G. Meade

William Campbell

Lieutenant Pitzer

David Carpenter

Colonel Thomas

C. Devin

Maxwell Caulfield

Lieutenant Strong Vincent

Donal Logue

Captain Ellis Spear

Dwier Brown

Captain Brewer

Herb Mitchell

Sergeant Andrew J.

Tozier

Emile O. Schmidt

Brigadier General

John Gibbon

Daniel Baumann

Mark Z. Danielewski

Vee Gentile

Privates

Ken Burns

Hancock's Aide

Michael Callahan

Bearded Man

Scott Allan Campbell

Captain Atherton

W. Clark

David Cole

Buford's Aide

Brian Egan

Cocky Lieutenant

Tom Fife

2nd Maine Man

David Fiske

Courier

John Fitzpatrick

Old 2nd Maine Man

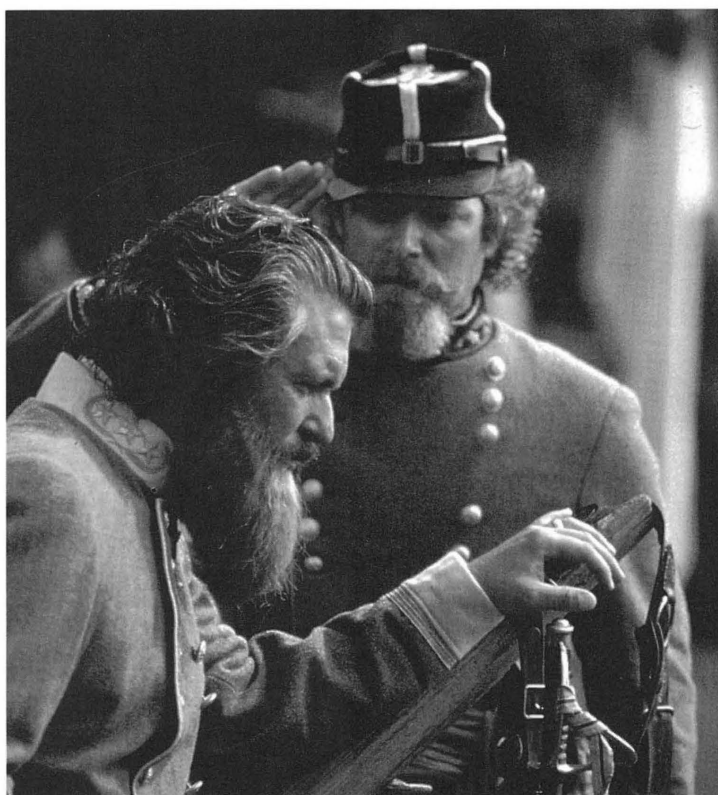
◀ Confederate assault is preceded by a massive artillery barrage. At first, Chamberlain cowers, but is inspired by the sight of an unperturbed Hancock. The Confederate troops move up through their own artillery positions, but then shells and rifle fire exact a devastating toll. Armistead's men are savagely cut down and the advance is reduced to a shambles, before degenerating into a piecemeal retreat. Lieutenant Chamberlain finds the dying Armistead on the battlefield. Already a broken man, Armistead is further upset to hear that his friend Hancock has also been wounded.

In the aftermath of the Confederate retreat, Lee suggests to his subordinates that the defeat was all his fault, but they vociferously deny it. Lee orders Longstreet to organise a withdrawal and expresses a pessimistic view of the Confederacy's prospects. The Chamberlains are reunited in a silent embrace.

Filmed on the actual locations of the 1863 battle, *Gettysburg* features, as the press notes put it, "the largest-scale motion picture sequences filmed in North America since D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation*." The comparison can be made in other ways too. Ronald F. Maxwell's film certainly lacks both the cosy romantic interest and the rampant racism of the Griffith epic, but it does offer a similar vision of the Civil War as an arena in which the civilised and pre-eminently honourable men of both sides somehow found themselves killing each other.

Like the Yankee Stonemans and the Confederate Camerons in *The Birth of a Nation*, Armistead and Hancock are still close friends although they fight on opposite sides. But how could they and their once united country have come to this? Griffith's film notoriously blamed not so much the institution of slavery but the slaves themselves for the outbreak of the Civil War. *Gettysburg* offers something equally absurd – it blames no one at all. The war's bloodiest battle is wholly detached from its social and political contexts and presented simplistically as a monument to the honour and endurance of the combatants on both sides: sterling qualities which, by implication, helped forge the modern American character.

As a large-scale reconstruction, the film's very narrow focus on nothing but the key historical figures involved in the battle is understandable. But its eagerness to present almost all the officers of both sides in a positive light means that *Gettysburg* is more like a military pageant than a living, breathing drama. It covers all the historical ground, but unlike Edward Zwick's Civil War film *Glory*, for instance, has no discernible point of view. The absence of preening Southern belles and plantation mansions is to be commended, but the film's reluctance to go beyond the honourable surfaces of its officer class, and in particular to probe into the more dangerous recesses of the Southern white psyche, is its biggest failing.



Full bearded quality: Tom Berenger, Stephen Lang

In script terms – though the performances sometimes hint at more – the officers on both sides are presented as life-size electronic puppets one would expect to find in the theme park that will surely some day be erected on the Gettysburg site. They may be historically accurate in the details of uniforms, manners and fulsome facial hair, but they are completely lacking in psychological complexity. These are all courageous, honourable men, who believe in God and the rightness of their cause, but how many of them on the Southern side owned slaves? How did they achieve and sustain their positions of power and, more to the point, how could they manage to persuade thousands of poor whites to fight and die with them in the cause of slavery? This is a rich vein of thought which the novels of William Faulkner in particular have exploited to the full: the huge gap between the chivalric code of the 'Southern gentleman' and the savage economic and racist realities which underpinned his social pretensions. *Gettysburg* consistently shies away from engaging with this issue, in favour of a mind-numbing litany of platitudes about the nobility of the human spirit.

Gettysburg is more like a traditional officers-only British war movie than the more democratically-inclined American model. The ordinary soldiers are canon fodder for the cameras and their point of view is never more than a positive reaction to their leaders' words. One longs for at least some token dissent from the ranks, but the film avoids any such jarring notes.

The movie's made-for-TV status also militates against a convincingly brutal presentation of the battle scenes. These sequences finally attain an impressive momentum, with the camera tracking past lines of ear-splitting artillery and

following thousands of men into the climatic charge. Unfortunately the rigorous censorship of US TV doesn't allow for an accurate depiction of the horrendous death and dismemberment exacted. And because of the film's focus on the officers, these thousands of soldiers are just so many ciphers who tidily fall over and die. This is a sanitised warfare that succeeds as spectacle, but which is badly lacking in urgency and personalised danger. Frequently many of the 5,000 extras involved (recruited from battle re-enactment enthusiasts from across the USA and Europe) can be seen looking lost while waiting their turn to be killed; the director also has the persistent bad habit of putting his camera in front of rather than behind his men's weapons. A key factor in the visual aesthetic of the war movie genre is the extreme difficulty of filming an actual battle. In real combat, the camera is hardly ever in front of the guns – if it were, the cameraman wouldn't be alive for very long. The low prowling camerawork in Lewis Milestone's *All Quiet on the Western Front* and Stanley Kubrick's *Paths of Glory* are both informed by this fundamental matter of the cameraman's life and death, and gain immensely in impact as a result. *Gettysburg* is sadly lacking in such power.

That said, there are real virtues in almost all the performances. Nineteenth-century stolidity, simple faith and common decency are marvelously conveyed by Jeff Daniels in particular, and the dashing enthusiasm of Stephen Lang's Pickett genuinely seems to belong to another far off, far more naive time. If the film's glaring lack of irony has a positive side, then it surely lies in the strength, commitment and full-bearded quality of its cast.

Tom Tunney

Gypsy

USA 1994

Director: Emile Ardolino

Certificate

Distributor
Entertainment
Production Companies
Storyline
Productions/All Girl
Productions
In association with
RHI Entertainment
Executive Producers
Robert Halmi Snr
Craig Zadan
Neil Meron
Bonnie Bruckheimer
Producers
Emile Ardolino
Cindy Gilmore
Line Producer
Whitney Green
Associate Producer
Bob Weber
Production Co-ordinator
Carolyn Hagan
Unit Production Managers
William Beaudine Jnr
Whitney Green
Location Manager
Flip Wyly
Post-production
Supervisor
David R. Elliott
Assistant Directors
Ellen Schwartz
Bettiann Fishman
Dan Coffie
Costing
David Rubin
NY:
Stuart Howard
Amy Scheter
Associate:
Debra Zane
Screenplay
Arthur Laurents
Based on his book
and inspired by the
memoirs of Gypsy
Rose Lee
Script Supervisor
Adell Aldrich
Director of Photography
Ralf Bode
Camera Operator
Mitchell Amundsen
Steadicam Operator
Chris Squires
Opticals
Cinema Research
Corporation
Editor
William Reynolds
Production Designer
Jackson De Govia
Art Director
John R. Jensen
Set Design
Geoff Hubbard
Louis Mann
Set Decorator
K.C. Fox
Production Illustrator
Nikita Knatz
Special Effects
Co-ordinator
John Hartigan
Costume Design
Bob Mackie
Costume Supervisors
Ret Turner
Alan Trugman
Make-up
Hallie D'Amore
Eugenia Weston
Hairstylist
Carol Meikle
Title Design
Pittard Sullivan
Fitzgerald
Main Title Footage
Gypsy Rose Lee Archive
Music/Songs
Jule Styne
Lyrics:
Stephen Sondheim
Music Conductor
Michael Rafter

Orchestrations

Sid Ramin
Robert Ginzler
John Kander
Music Producers
Michael Rafter
Curt Sobel
Arif Mardin
Music Supervisor
Marie Snyder
Music Editors
Scott Grusin
Sally Boldt
Songs
"Some People", "Small
World", "Little Lamb
(I Wonder How Old
I Am)", "You'll Never
Get Away from Me",
"All I Need is the Girl",
"Everything's Coming
Up Roses", "Together,
Wherever We Go",
"You Gotta Have a
Gimmick", "Let Me
Entertain You",
"Rose's Turn"
Choreography
Original stage
production:
Jerome Robbins
Recreated by:
Bonnie Walker
Sound Editor
Greg Schorer
ADR Editor
J. Michael Hooser
Production Sound Mixer
David Roone
Sound Re-records
Larry Stensvold
Robert Schaper Jnr
Garrie Bolger
Movement Consultant
Peggy Holmes

Cast

Bette Midler
Rose Hovick
Peter Riegert
Herbie
Cynthia Gibb
Louise Hovick
Jennifer Beck
June Hovick
Ed Asner
Rose's Father
Lacey Chabert
Baby June
Elisabeth Moss
Baby Louise
Keene Curtis
Mr Kringelein
Michael Jeter
Mr Goldstone
Jeffrey Broadhurst
Tulsa
Christine Ebersole
Tessie Tura
Linda Hart
Mazzeppa
Anna McNeely
Electra
Sean Sullivan
Georgie
Autumn Clifton
Balloon Girl
Spencer Liff
Clarence
Julian Bratolyubov
Jacko Conductor
Joey Cee
Blake Armstrong
Too Weiner
Newsboys
Peter Lockyer
Yonkers
Michael Moore
LA
Patrick Boyd
Kansas
Terry Lindholm
Flagstaff
Gregg Russell
Farm Boy
Daniel Charles
K.W. Miller
Cows

Lang Yun
Waitress
Marilyn Rising
Marjorie Way
LeElyn Lindsay
Geraldine
Elkin Antoniou
Rebecca Russell
Rachelle Sando
Hollywood Blondes
Bonnie Walker
Diana Laurenson
Gladiator Girls
Jennifer Gertsman
Lynnmarie Inge
Karen Martin
Colleen McMahon
Wendy Pasquale
Melanie Rembrandt
Krista Silvey
Hillary Turk
Minsky Girls

Anne Vazee
Renee
John C. Moskoff
Phil
Gilles Savard
Bougeron-Cochon
Andrea Martin
Tony Shalhoub
Rachel Sweet
David Marciano
John La Motta
Mike Nussbaum

12,791 feet
142 minutes

Dolby stereo
In colour
CFI

Seattle, the early 1920s. While Baby June Hovick and her sister Baby Louise audition for a vaudeville show, their mother Rose walks on stage and takes over. Rose asks her father for money, but he refuses. Vowing to make Baby June a star, she steals her father's gold retirement plaque. In Los Angeles, Rose meets Herbie, a candy salesman, who falls in love with her. She persuades him to become the girls' manager, and they set off on tour with the vaudeville show.

Some years later, on Louise's birthday, Rose and her entourage, which now includes four boys, are about to be kicked out of their hotel bedroom when Herbie arrives with Mr Goldstone, who offers them a contract on the Orpheum circuit. Herbie asks Rose to marry him but all she can think of is June's career. After an audition for a leading theatre, June is offered a year's contract and the chance to become a serious actress on condition that her mother stays away. Rose refuses to sign and June is upset at losing her chance. Louise finds one of the young men in the act, Tulsa, rehearsing his own dance number and she starts to dance with him. The next day, however, Tulsa and June elope; the other members of the troupe leave too. Determined to make Louise a star instead, Rose sets up an all-girl troupe, Rose Louise and the Hollywood Blondes.

Down on its luck, the act is booked into a burlesque joint. Louise befriends the strippers who show her their acts. Rose has promised to marry Herbie and give up vaudeville once the run is over. On the final night, overhearing the manager say that the top-billed stripper has been arrested for soliciting, Rose insists that Louise do it instead. Herbie walks out in disgust. Louise is announced as Gypsy Rose Lee. After an uncertain start she eventually becomes a confident, successful entertainer. When Rose fusses over Louise in her dressing room the two end up rowing. Rose slams out, walking on to the stage, where she acknowledges that her ambitions were all for her own sake. Louise joins her and they hug and make up.

Director Emile Ardolino made silk purses out of two other music-oriented films – *Dirty Dancing* and *Sister Act*. For this one, finished just before his recent death, he had more promising material to work with –

Stephen Sondheim and Jule Styne's vivacious stage musical, and Mervyn Leroy's energetic 1962 film. Ardolino's version is loud, florid and entertaining. Bette Midler is manic as the obsessive, ambitious Rose, her beady eyes never once softening, not even when she declares her love for Peter Riegert's weak and downtrodden Herbie. This monster mother pretends to everyone that her teenage "babies" are still nine and ten years old, pushing precocious, lisping June to the front in her baby curls and silver shoes and hiding shy Louise in a stage cow, forbidding her to wear dresses. Yet she also has a great, smothering, protective love for her children and can be funny, warm and kind.

Musicals are rarely subtle, and this is no exception. But often the crudeness can have stunning effects. When Midler sings the musical's most famous song, "Everything's Coming Up Roses", she turns it into a cry of rage. Grabbing at handfuls of imaginary roses and daffodils, she tears them apart in anger and pain. And when Rose finally sees what has been going on inside her, her moment of self-knowledge is punctuated by a swoon of physical dizziness as her name goes up in lights behind her. Midler's performance balances the sentimentality of the young Louise, a mawkish, gentle, animal-loving sap with none of her sister June's sense of irony. Louise's misery is relentlessly portrayed: dressed as the front end of a cow, she watches Tulsa, one of the boys in the show, dance and wishes she could be his glamorous partner. When they dance together it seems as if her dream might come true. One scene later, Tulsa has gone off with June. But the film ends with a too neat mixture of insight and sentiment when Rose admits in the final hug: "I just wanted to be noticed," and Louise replies: "And I just wanted to be noticed by you".

Ironically, the movie's comic sense is closer to the burlesque so despised by Rose – and most of it is of her own making. In this respect, much is made of Rose's constant interference – her insistence on creeping about the stage, moving scenery while her children are auditioning – and on the form her ambitions take – the endless dreams that she insists on seeing as inspirational visions of inspiration but which turn out to be a bathetic version of the same old show. The question is, why remake – particularly for television? Apart from a clutch of great songs, the energy and ironic humour of this version more than match the original movie. And there is a post-feminist interpretation of *Gypsy* which sees it as being about two women relating to each other rather than a man. More to the point, Louise learns to value herself when she becomes a stripper and takes control of her body and sexuality. The world of burlesque in which Louise finally grows up is therefore seen as more real than the artificial world of sugar-sweet little girls in which Rose tries to cocoon her daughters.

Amanda Lipman

Huozhe (To Live)

Hong Kong 1994

Director: Zhang Yimou

Certificate
12
Distributor
Electric Pictures
Production Company
ERA International
(Hong Kong) Ltd
In association with
Shanghai Film Studios
For Century
Communications Ltd
Executive Producers
Kow Fuhong
Christophe Tseng
Producer
Chiu Fu Sheng
[Qiu Fusheng]
Associate Producer
Barbara Robinson
Production Managers
Hu Shaofeng
Zhang Zhengyan
Post-production
Co-ordinator
ERA International
(Japan) Ltd:
Shirley Kao
Assistant Directors
Zeng Quanbao
Zhang Shaochun
Wang Bin
Script
Yu Hua
Lu Wei
Screenplay
Lu Wei
Based on the novel
Lifetimes by Yu Hua
Continuity
Yu Yin
Ying Yan
Script Editor
Wang Bin
Director of Photography
Lu Yue
2nd Unit Director
of Photography
Meng Weibin
Editor
Du Yuan
Art Director
Cao Jiuping
Explosives
Chen Hongyun
Costume Design
Dong Huamiao
Wardrobe
Wei Shaoming
Make-up
Sun Wei
Music
Zhao Jiping
Music Conductor
Hu Bingyu
Beijing Chamber
Orchestra
Sound
Tao Jing
Hiroshi Yamagata
Nikkatsu Studio
Centre:
Jinbo Koshirou
Nakayama Gikou
Ito Shinichi
Yamagata Hiroshi
Okuhara Yoshiyuki
Shimono Hiroshi
Komatsu Masato
Ono Makoto

Cast
Ge You
Xu Fugui
Gong Li
Jiazhen
Niu Ben
Town Chief Niu
Guo Tao
Chunsheng
Jiang Wu
Wan Erxi
Ni Dahong
Long'er
Liu Tianchi
Adult Fengxia
Zhang Lu
Teenage Fengxia
Xiao Cong
Fengxia as a child
Dong Fei
Youqing
Huang Zongluo
Fugui's Father
Liu Yanjing
Fugui's Mother
Li Lianyi
Lao Quan
Zhao Yuxiu
Dr Wang
Zhang Kang
Mantou
Pan Jingle
Liu Guangming
Liu Hua
Qu Zhishao
Yang Kuanhou
Hao Bingli
Liu Xingwen
Wang Zengzhong
Du Zhonggan
Meng Guangtang
Puppet Artists
Liu Renbo
Ding Jianjun
Li Fangping
Li Hong
Wang Danning
Wang Jianming
Wang Yongwei
Su Yan
Zeng Quanbao
Zhang Shaochun
Yang Tongxun
Dong Lifan
Pan Yuejuan
Jia Kangtong
Zhang Zhongliang
Li Wenliang
Xie Liang
Dai Zhongming
Wang Yongguang
Cui Lewen
Chen Shuwen
Huang Xinming

11,250 feet
125 minutes

Dolby stereo
In colour

Subtitles

North China, circa 1946. In a series of dice games, gambler Xu Fugui loses his family mansion and entire inheritance to Long'er, the boss of a shadow-puppet troupe. Fugui's pregnant wife Jiazhen has despaired of reforming him and returned to her parents with their deaf-mute daughter Fengxia. The shock of losing house and home gives Fugui's father a fatal heart attack. Fugui sets up as a market vendor to care for his ailing mother. Seeing his new humility, Jiazhen returns

to him with Fengxia and their newborn son Youqing.

A year later, Long'er refuses Fugui a loan to open a shop but gives him his old puppets and suggests that he starts up a troupe of his own. Fugui performs all over the region, narrating the stories while his best friend Chunsheng works the puppets. During one show, however, they are press-ganged as labourers by soldiers of the KMT (Nationalist) army. The kindly officer Lao Quan befriends them and tells them a Communist victory in the civil war is imminent. As the Communist People's Liberation Army approaches, there is mass desertion and Lao Quan is killed by a sniper. Fugui and Chunsheng surrender to the PLA and are soon putting on a makeshift puppet show to entertain the troops.

By the time Fugui returns home (without Chunsheng, who has joined the PLA as a driver), China has a Communist government. Fugui's mother has died, and Jiazhen and Fengxia have been given work delivering water in the town. New town leader Niu welcomes back Fugui as a hero of the revolution and invites him to watch the prosecution of Long'er, on trial for counter-revolutionary sabotage. The execution of Long'er teaches Fugui to maintain his own political credentials. In 1958, as Mao Zedong calls for the 'Great Leap Forward' into Communism, Fugui saves his puppets from the drive to smelt all household metal by offering to put on a morale boosting show for the metal workers. During the show, Youqing (exhausted from long hours with his metal-smelting team) is killed while sleeping by a wall that is accidentally demolished by the district chief's car. The culprit turns out to be Chunsheng. Jiazhen angrily refuses his offer of compensation and tells him he owes them a life.

By June 1966, in the wake of the Cultural Revolution few figures of authority are left unscathed. Niu tells Fugui to burn his shadow puppets and proposes a husband for Fengxia: Wan Erxi, lame in one leg, leader of his factory's Red Guards. The match is a success and the couple marry. Chunsheng is meanwhile denounced as a "capitalist roadster"; intending suicide, he secretly visits Fugui to beg forgiveness for killing his son. Jiazhen forgives him and urges him to fight on: the life he owes them should be his own. When Fengxia goes into labour with her first child, her husband and parents are shocked to find the hospital staffed by junior nurses, all the qualified personnel having been denounced. Wan Erxi invents a political pretext for fetching Dr Wang Bin; the old man is weak and starving, so Fugui buys him steamed bread buns. Fengxia gives birth to a healthy son (nicknamed Mantou – "Little Bun"), but then haemorrhages. Dr Wang is unable to help, having choked on the buns and passed out.

Years later life has returned to normal. Erxi and Mantou are living with the now elderly Fugui and Jiazhen. Mantou buys some chicks while on a family visit to the graves of Fengxia ►

◀ and Youqing. Back home, Fugui pulls out the chest that used to house his puppets as a home for the chickens.

Two years ago, Zhang Yimou seemed to have redeemed himself in the eyes of the Chinese Communist Party. The authorities showered *The Story of Qiu Ju* with awards, and at the same time 'un-banned' his earlier *Ju Dou* and *Raise the Red Lantern*. But *To Live* has got him into trouble again. The film is in limbo at home, and its Hong Kong-based production company Era International has been criticised for allowing its sale and distribution everywhere else without Beijing's seal of approval. Zhang's immediate future as a director is again uncertain.

The film itself does little to court controversy. Taken alongside *The Blue Kite* and *Farewell My Concubine*, the two other recent Chinese movies to tackle aspects of China's modern history across the lives of individuals, *To Live* seems cautious, if not timid. The only way that it challenges current Party orthodoxy is by gently mocking the naivety of the Mao personality cult in the 50s and 60s and by presenting the excesses of the Cultural Revolution in black-comedy terms. Its only tendentious comment springs from the repetition of a fable of progress that Fugui uses to teach his son and later his grandson – the second time, conspicuously omitting 'Communism' from the evolutionary scheme of things. Compared with Chen Kaige's wholesale revisionism and flirtation with deviant sexuality or Tian Zhuangzhuang's implication that all the foundations for the collective madness of the Cultural Revolution were laid in the 50s, these transgressions are at best minor. Had the film been made by someone less high profile than Zhang Yimou, or had not been completed so soon after *The Blue Kite*, it would probably have incurred no disapproval.

Zhang has given relatively few interviews about the film, but in all those that have reached print insists that his aim was to make a genuinely populist film; an account of four turbulent decades from a grass-roots perspective, emphasising not the tragedies and sufferings that Chinese people have learned to regard as endemic, but rather the fortitude and general good humour that sustain them. In Zhang's view, this distances *To Live* from films like *The Blue Kite* and *Farewell My Concubine*, which he criticises for adopting an 'elitist' stance and for dwelling excessively on victim figures. It's not hard to guess why Zhang feels the need to open up a space between his film and those others, but his analysis seems oddly awry. *To Live* actually fits neatly between the low-key naturalism of *The Blue Kite* and the high-powered histrionics of *Farewell My Concubine* and its script is closer to conventional melodrama than either of them.

But Zhang, of course, is after something more than melodrama, even if he uses some of the tenets of melodrama to broaden the film's appeal. What he picked up on in Yu Hua's



Everyday story: Gong Li

lengthy (and considerably more melodramatic) novel was the underlying sense of resilience in ordinary lives, and he has clearly realised that the best way to express this on screen is through his cast. *To Live* is the first Zhang Yimou film in which the cinematography and editing are more at the service of the actors than of the director's vision, and in which the design and colour schemes are relegated to supporting roles. (It's also the first since *Red Sorghum* in which Gong Li's role is less important than her male co-star's.) Zhang's formalist proclivities are more or less limited to the *leitmotiv* shot of the stone-flagged street that prefaces each 'chapter', the minor changes in its appearance reflecting the passing years and the changing political climate. He even succeeds in resisting the temptation to turn the shadow-puppet sequences into anything more than channels for Fugui's unsophisticated wit and exuberance.

The simultaneous reliance on melodrama and determination to transcend its potential excesses results in some fancy directorial footwork. Zhang softens (but in no way subverts) most of the emotional climaxes by cutting from close-ups to long shots or letting Zhao Jiping's plaintive score rather than the actors' performances carry the weight of the scene; the only exceptions are the deaths of the children Youqing and Fengxia, which are registered mainly through the traumatised reactions of Fugui and Jiazhen respectively. More impressively, Zhang minimises the feeling of melodrama by foregrounding domestic matters of little narrative consequence wherever he can get away with it. This strategy is nowhere clearer than in the final shot, an extended take of the surviving members of the family eating together happily – not Zhang Yimou's first 'open' ending, but by far his least portentous.

It's crucial to the film's effect that much of it seems more comic than tragic. In this respect, the choice of Ge You to play Fugui was inspired. Ge (best known in China for irreverent satirical comedy and best known here as the gay aesthete in *Farewell My Concubine*) is cast against type as a simple man with little capacity for anger. Ge You, whose poker-thin face is inherently comic, gives a masterfully underplayed performance. *To Live* is at its best when Zhang trusts his lead actor's face to carry the weight of the film's argument that ordinariness and optimistic resilience are essentially the same thing.

Tony Rayns

Ladybird

United Kingdom 1994

Director: Ken Loach

Certificate

18

Distributor

UIP

Production Company

Parallax Pictures
For Film Four
International

Producer

Sally Hibbin

Production Co-ordinator

Shellie Smith

Production Manager

Lesley Stewart

Location Manager

Robert How

Assistant Directors

Tommy Gormley

Nick Laws

Susie Williams

Screenplay

Rona Munro

Script Supervisor

Susanna Lenton

Director of Photography

Barry Ackroyd

Editor

Jonathan Morris

Production Designer

Martin Johnson

Art Director

Fergus Clegg

Wardrobe

Wendy Knowles

Make-up

Anne Spiers

Titles

Peter Watson

Music

George Fenton

Additional:

Mauricio Venegas

Songs

"Candles" by Cally

Domitila Cane'ki

"Delilah" by Les Reed,

Barry Mason; "I Like

It" by Mitch Murray;

"Whole Lotta Shaking

Going On" by Carly

Williams; "Ain't

Nothin' Goin' On But

The Rent" by Gwen

Guthrie; "(I Never

Promised You A) Rose

Garden" by Joe Smith;

"The Rose" by

Amanda McBroom;

"Up Where We Belong"

by Jack Nitzsche, Will

Jennings, Buffy Sainte-

Marie; "La Felicidad"

by Palito Ortega

Dubbing Editor

Kevin Brazier

Dubbing Mixer

David Old

Sound Mixer

Ray Beckett

Advisers

Mike Cook

Jackie Glossop

Annie Souter

Sandra Tranter

Stunt Arranger

Lee Sheward

Cast

Crissy Rock

Maggie

Vladimir Vega

Jorge

Sandie Lavelle

Mairead

Mauricio Venegas

Adrian

Ray Winstone

Simon

Clare Perkins

Jill

Jason Stracey

Sean

Luke Brown

Mickey

Lily Farrell

Serena

Scottie Moore

Maggie's Father

Linda Ross

Maggie's Mother

Kim Hartley

Maggie, aged 5

Jimmy Batten

Karaoke Compere

Sue Sawyer

Foster Mother

Pamela Hunt

Mrs Higgs

Alan Gold

Neighbour

James Bannon

Fast Food Manager

Christine Ellerbeck

Moir Denning

Caroline Conway

Deirdre Edwards

Sue Gifford

Tom Keller

Nick Miles

Ali De Souza

Lucie Fitchett

Arbel Jones

Terence Maynard

Yvonne Riley

Social Workers

Bruce Alexander

Jill Connick

Rosemary Frankau

Katherine Gieve

Lorraine Hilton

Stephen Webber

Lawyers

Lee Alliston

Gillian Borders

Bob Coveney

John Hadleigh

Susan Raasay

Ken Whitfield

Policemen

Charlene Birchall

Colin Carr

Nicholas Harrison

Anna Healy

Valerie Hunkins

Samantha Lavelle

Jenny Mandis

Katie McMillan

Kimberley McMillan

Samantha Miller

Shirley Montgomery

Chantelle Steadman

Jim Willett

9,164 feet

101 minutes

Dolby stereo

In colour

Maggie is a Liverpudlian living in London. One night, out with friends at the pub, she meets Jorge, a political exile from Paraguay; she ends up going home with him, and in the small hours, tells him her life story... She has been in a series of abusive relationships; her last boyfriend, Simon, was so violent that she sought a place for herself and her four children at a

women's refuge. While she is out one night, there is a fire at the refuge and her eldest son Sean is seriously burnt. It transpires Maggie might be partly to blame, as she locked them into the room without leaving a key with one of the other women. Consequently her children are taken away from her and placed in care with the social services.

Maggie is told that she can be reunited with her children if she stays at a family centre. Instead, she insists on being given a flat, but without success. Sent to the family centre with her children, she walks out and returns to Simon. She persuades him to run away, but the social services chase them; after an argument, he drives away with the children. The police intervene, and the social services accuse Simon of abusing the children. Maggie goes to court hoping to get the children back, but is refused custody.

Meanwhile, Maggie starts a new life with Jorge. She becomes pregnant and the couple move into a council flat. Jorge gets a job as a fast food cook; Maggie has the baby and everything seems happy. But when a health visitor and then a social worker come to see them, Maggie refuses to let them in. The social worker confers with a cantankerous neighbour, who tells lies about Maggie and Jorge. The police take the baby away, and the couple's relationship is scrutinised by the social services. When their case comes up, the neighbour gives evidence and falsely claims that Jorge hits Maggie. It transpires that Jorge might have a wife in Paraguay; he is served with a deportation order, but later has his passport returned. Maggie gets pregnant again, but in hospital her baby is taken away from her straight after delivery. Maggie is furious that Jorge didn't do more to prevent this. Despite the tension in their relationship, they stay together. A post-script tells us that Maggie and Jorge have been allowed to have three other children, but they have no access to their first two, nor to the children from Maggie's previous relationships.

Based on a true story, *Ladybird* dramatises harrowing events that would seem incredible in fiction. But Ken Loach's film, a return to the more specific female subject matter of *Family Life* or *Poor Cow* offers little insight into the character under scrutiny. It should be a fierce indictment of a state that attempts to pathologise Maggie, who, as the working-class 'unmarried' mother who just keeps 'breeding', is the archetypal bugbear of Majorite policy. But the film itself ends up pathologising her, and violence against women is again portrayed as endemic to the working class. In the present political climate, this is a very dangerous move.

In Crissy Rock's unnerving and powerful performance, Maggie is presented as a raw, visceral force, larger than life. The scene in which her newly-born baby is wrenched away from her is traumatic to watch, especially when she is met with the final indignity of being sedated as if she

were some breeding animal. The trouble is that, although there is no excuse for what the social services put her through, she is not always an easy person to sympathise with. In a fiction film, this would be something to applaud (the more difficult and unsympathetic women in films the better), but the case-study nature of *Ladybird* makes it a more complicated matter. One can imagine the details of Maggie's life playing into the hands of the present government rather than providing ammunition against it.

Though there is never any question about Maggie's ability to be a good mother – the brief scenes of her and her children have a sweetness which gives the film its respite – her absolutely justified anger implodes on her and renders her a passive force. She is presented as victim of her own emotional state, as much as of the state's interventionist methods. In this respect, an understanding of her character is needed, rather than just a depiction of it. Her early life receives the glibest of glimpses; the brief flashbacks to Maggie's childhood show that her father was as violent towards her mother as her partners were to her, and she later mentions that she was sexually abused as a child. There is something perfunctory about the way that this information is conveyed, as though it were not organic to the rest of the film but simply tacked on.

Given the spectacular wall of anger that is put up around Maggie, it is the pacifying character of Jorge that we are given space to identify with. He is the one who attempts to co-operate with the social services, who brings his intellect to bear on the case. This is a revealing move on the film's part. It compounds Loach's thesis, which seems increasingly to be true, that the United Kingdom shares much in common with despotic countries (cf. the liberation theology of *Raining Stones*); in Britain too, those tainted by the state's ideology end up snitching on their neighbours.

Jorge knows too well how to negotiate with dictatorial authorities; one tries to be accommodating and play them at their own game, not out of cowardice but in order to survive. It is deplorable that these skills should not be out of place when dealing with the British social services. But it is problematic that Jorge, the middle-class intellectual poet who ran shelters for the homeless before being forced to leave his country, becomes the softly-spoken voice of sanity, as the railing Maggie is pushed beyond any reason of her own. It may be honest to the facts of the case, but it is none the less smug.

One can imagine a Hollywood remake with Sally Field and Raul Julia, in which Maggie would end up going to night school to study law so that she can fight in the high court for her right to see her children again. Sometimes it's worth remembering that fiction can have a utopian purpose as well.

Lizzie Francke

The Lion King

USA 1994

Directors: Roger Allers, Rob Minkoff

Certificate

PG

Distributor

Buena Vista

Production Company

Walt Disney Pictures

Executive Producers

Thomas Schumacher
Sarah McArthur

Producer

Don Hahn

Associate Producer

Alice Dewey

Production Co-ordinators

Animation/Effects:

Matt Garbera

Clean-up:

Jeanie Lynd Sorenson

Scene Planning:

Annamarie Costa

John Cunningham

Tom Baker

Mary Lescher

Production Managers

Dana Axelrod

Florida:

Don Walters

Baer:

Craig Sost

Post-production Manager

Sara Duran

Casting

Brian Chavanne

ADR Voice:

Barbara Harris

Screenplay

Irene Mecchi

Jonathan Roberts

Linda Woolverton

Digitizing Camera

Supervisor

Robyn L. Roberts

Digitizing Camera

Operators

Kent Gordon

Jo Ann Breuer

Lynette E. Cullen

Michael McFarren

Tina Baldwin

Karen N. China

Gareth Fishbaugh

David J. Rowe

Animation Camera

Operators

John Aardal

Andrew Simmons

Gary W. Smith

Digital Film

Printing/Optical

Supervisors

Christopher Gee

Cristine Beck

Chuck Warren

Ron Jackson

Brandy Hill

Artistic Supervisors

Story:

Brenda Chapman

Layout:

Dan St. Pierre

Robert Walker

Background:

Doug Ball

Robert E. Stanton

Clean-up:

Vera Lanpher

Ruben Procopio

Visual Effects:

Scott Santoro

Jeff Dutton

Computer Graphics

Imagery:

Scott F. Johnston

Supervising Animation

Young Simba:

Mark Henn

Adult Simba:

Ruben Aquino

Mufasa:

Tony Fucile

Scar:

Andreas Deja

Adult Nala:

Anthony DeRosa

Young Nala:

Aaron Blaise

Pumbaa:

Tony Bancroft

Timon:

Michael Surrey

Rafiki:

James Baxter

Zazu:

Ellen Woodbury

Sarabi:

Russ Edmonds

Hyanas:

David Burgess

Alex Kupersmidt

Animators

Young Simba:

Tom Bancroft

Broose Johnson

T. Daniel Hofstedt

Danny Wawrzaszek

Adult Simba:

Randy Haycock

Joe Ekers

Michael Cedeno

Dale Baer

Lorna Cook

Mufasa:

Phil Young

Chris Wahl

Brad Kuha

Scar:

Doug Frankel

Jean Morel

Mark Koetsier

Alex Williams

Adult Nala:

Bob Bryan

Gilda Palinginis

Pumbaa:

Ron Husband

Tim Allen

Dave Pruiksma

Timon:

Brian Ferguson

James Lopez

Mike Shaw

Zazu:

Randy Cartwright

Barry Temple

Michael Swofford

Hyanas:

Rejean Bourdages

Greg S. Manwaring

Ken Boyer

Lou Dellarosa

Larry White

Computer Animation

Gregory Griffith

Linda Bel

Effects Animation

Dorse Lanpher

Ted C. Kierscey

Ed Coffey

Christine Blum

Mauro Maressa

Tom Hush

Allen Blyth

Joey Milenderberger

Eusebio Torres

Steve Moore

Marlon West

Garrett Wren

Chris Jenkins

Dave Bossert

Animation Check

Supervisor

Janet Bruce

Animation Checking

Cynthia Goode

Karen S. Paat

Mavis Shafer

Karen Hepburn

Gary Shafer

Barbara Wiles

Final Check

Janette Huelt

Teri N. McDonald

Monica Marroquin

Saskia Raevouri

Clean-up Animation

Supervisors

Young Simba:

Daniel A. Gracey

Adult Simba:

Bill Berg

Mufasa/Sarabi:

Brian Clift

Scar:

Nancy Kniep

Kathleen M. Bailey

Marianne Tucker

Adult Nala:

Scott Anderson

Young Nala:

Tracy Mark Lee

Timon/Pumbaa:

Debra Armstrong

Rafiki:

Marshall Toomey

Zazu:

Dan Tanaka

Hyanas:

Alex Topete

Additional Young

Simba/Miscellaneous

Characters:

Vera Lanpher

Breakdown/Inbetweeners

Young Simba:

Dan Daly

Tim Hodge

Maurilio Morales

Sherrie H. Sinclair

Chadd Ferron

Pamela Mathues

James Parris

Theodore Anthony

Lee Ty

Adult Simba:

Wendy Muir

Kevin Smith

Daniel Bond

Daniel Yontack Lim

Sean Gallimore

Daniel O'Sullivan

Mufasa/Sarabi:

Laurey Foulkes

Norma Rivera

Wendie Fischer

Annette Byrne-Morel

Scar:

Jamie Kezlarian Bolio

Diana Coco

Martin Schwartz

Jody Kooistra

Jung Chan Woo

Adult Nala:

Carl Phillip Hall

Andrew Ramos

Chang Yei Kim

Young Nala:

Tom Fish

Mario J. Menjivar

Timon/Pumbaa:

Janet Heerhan Bae

Ron Westlund

Moon Hwan Choi

Judy Grabenstatter

Eduardo Oliveras

Rafiki:

Miriam McDonnell

Mary-Jean Repchuk

Zazu:

Bill Thinnies

Brian Beauchamp

James A. Harris

Richard D. Rocha

Hyanas:

Noreen Beasley

Will Huneycutt

Dave Recinos

Paulo R. Alvarado

Ernest Keen

Samantha Lair

Rachel R. Bibb

Tom Labaff

Phil Noto

Lon Smart

Additional Young

Simba/Miscellaneous

Characters:

Beverly Adams

Daniel James Galieote

Mary Measures

Robert Espanto

Domingo

Kenneth Kinoshita

Jane Misk

Cheryl Polakow</



Laws of nature: 'The Lion King'

land. But Scar is waiting to make his move, and after an unsuccessful attempt to dispose of Simba by sending him off to explore an elephant graveyard, deep in hyena territory, without adult supervision, he hatches a dastardly plot to murder Mufasa and usurp the throne.

Enlisting the help of the hyenas, Scar lures the unsuspecting Simba into the path of a wildebeest stampede; Mufasa is killed trying to save his son. Scar then convinces the shocked Simba that the tragedy was his fault, and that he should go into exile. Narrowly escaping Scar's hyena henchmen, Simba collapses in the desert. There he is found by Pumbaa, a friendly warthog, and his wisecracking meerkat sidekick Timon. Adopting their 'no worries' philosophy, Simba grows into a bug-eating slacker. One day, he saves Pumbaa from being eaten by a lioness; it turns out to be Nala, who brings bad news from Pride Rock. Scar's reign has brought famine and devastation to the plain, and she urges Simba to return and put things right.

But Simba shrinks from the task, and it isn't until Rafiki, a witch doctor mandrill, seeks him out, that he resolves to face his past. He returns to do battle with Scar and learns the truth about his father's death. Galvanised with righteous anger, Simba saves himself but lets Scar be torn to pieces by the hyenas.

A year later, the ecological balance is restored, and, above the flourishing plain, Rafiki the mandrill presents the new-born son of Simba and Nala – the future lion king.

The *Lion King*, Disney's thirty-second full-length animated feature, has already been phenomenally successful in America, as well as extremely controversial for certain elements that are supposedly traumatic for the very young. Despite this, it maintains a consistently saccharine tone; it is also, as might be expected, unconscionably pompous.

Disney's first cartoon feature to be based on an original story, *The Lion King* purports to be no less than "a unique allegory about each new generation being a torchbearer for its ancestors". Since Disney have always been at their best when bastardising well-loved children's stories, it seems a shame that they have suddenly felt the need to start weaving unique allegories, particularly ones that prop themselves up on such well-worn themes. From the opening scene, the film clearly aspires to a kind of Shakespearian grandeur. It begins with the hordes of furry faithful applauding the arrival of Simba to a song entitled 'Circle of Life', which is deafening and platitudinous in about equal measure (and just what are the gazelles and zebras so happy about – there's a new predator in town). The *Hamlet* parallel is earnestly laboured, and there's a bizarre moment when Scar, like a hairier Richard III, sings of his coup d'état while the cave he's in mutates into the phallic towers of fascist architecture and the hyenas start goose-stepping.

The film's emphasis is on flashy, computer-generated effects (like the sensurround wildebeest stampede) to the detriment of the cartoonish sprightliness that usually makes Disney's version of the animal kingdom so endearing. There is a jolly interlude (as well as a jarring change of pace) with the fast-talking meerkat Timon, and Jeremy Irons does a creditable George Sanders impersonation as Scar, but the fun loses out to the portentousness. And despite all the money lavished on it, the stylisation looks cheap and rather nasty – the lions are peaky, the zebras beaky, and the warthog has a nose like an electrical socket.

Nonetheless, *The Lion King* has been so popular that Disney are pulling it out of US theatres so that they can re-release it for Thanksgiving – the kind of shameless marketing exercise only Disney can get away with. But their latest is not a patch on *The Jungle Book*.

Caren Myers

The Mask

USA 1994

Director: Charles Russell

Certificate

PG

Distributor

Entertainment
Production Company
New Line productions
In association with
Dark Horse
Entertainment

Executive Producers

Mike Richardson
Charles Russell
Michael De Luca

Producer

Bob Engelman
Executive in Charge
of Production

Deborah Moore

Associate Producers

Carla Fry
Ann Burgund
Production Co-ordinator

Lisa Van Cott

Unit Production Manager

Bob Engelman

Location Manager

Marc Strachan

Executive in Charge

of Post-production

Joe Fineman

Post-production

Supervisor

Steven Kaminsky

Assistant Directors

Denis L. Stewart
Bryan Dresden
Ty Arnold

Casting

Fern Champion
Mark Paladini
ADR Voice:

Barbara Harris

Screenplay

Mike Werb

Story

Michael Fallon
Mark Verheiden
Based on the

characters in

Dark Horse Comics

Script Supervisor

Tricia Ronten

Director of Photography

John R. Leonetti

Additional Photography

Mark Irwin

Animation Photography

Brian Adams

Camera Operators

Hugo Cortina

Visual Effects:

Martin Rosenberg

Kim Marks

Optical:

Keith Johnson

James C. Lim

Steadicam Operator

Bruce Green

Special Visual

Effects/Computer

Animation

Industrial Light

& Magic

Additional Visual Effects

Dream Quest Images

Visual Effects Consultants

Ken Ralston

Scott Squires

Steve "Spaz" Williams

Visual Effects Executive

Producer

Mark Galvin

Visual Effects Executive in

Charge of Production

Patricia Blau

Visual Effects Supervisors

Scott Squires

John Farhat

Animation:

Steve "Spaz" Williams

Technical:

Rob Burton

John Murrah

Tim Landry

Animation/Visual Effects

Producer

Clint Goldman

Visual Effects Producer

Robert Stadd

Associate Visual Effects

Producer

Christian Kubsch

Visual Effects Co-ordinator

Jill Brooks

Visual Effects Art Direction

Supervisor

Doug Chiang

Visual Effects Art Director

Benton Jew

Visual Effects Editors

Bill Kimberlin

Derrick Mitchell

Optical Co-ordinator

Lisa Vaughn

Optical Line-up

Jennifer Lee

Tim Geideman

Matte Artists

Eric Chauvin

Yusei Uesugi

Computer Graphics

Sequence Supervisors

Ellen Poon

Sandra Ford Karpman

Jim Mitchell

Animation Supervisors

Jeff Burks

Milo:

Tom "Noodles" Bertino

CGI Animator

Dan Deleuw

Computer Graphics

Animation:

Chris Armstrong

Kyle Balda

Rob Coleman

Bill Fletcher

Wade Howie

Paul Hunt

Stewart W. Lew

Les Major

Dale McBeath

Kyle Odermatt

Shawna Olwen

Wes Ford Takahashi

Dan Taylor

Artists:

Karen Ansel

Joe Alter

Donald S. Butler

Stefen Fangmeier

Bijan Forutanpour

Christophe Hery

Euan K. Macdonald

Robert Marinic

Barbara L. Nellis

Dennis Turner

Carolyn Ensle Rendu

Robert Weaver

Andy White

Habib Zaragarpour

Production Manager:

Gail Currey

Co-ordinator:

Nancy Jill Luckoff

Associate Production

Manager:

Suzy Vissotzky Tooley

Executive in Charge

of Digital Effects

Thomas A. Williams

Digital Artists

Lisa Drostova

Joanne Hafner

Jack Mongovan

Susan Ross

Catherine Tate

Editor

Arthur Coburn

Production Designer

Craig Stearns

Art Director

Randy Moore

Set Decorator

Ellen Tretleben

Set Dressers

Julie Sexsmith

Terence Doherty

James Gregory Evans

Illustrator

Mike Van Cleave

Storyboard Artist

Peter Von Sholly

Sculptures

Daniel R. Engle

Special Effects

Co ordinator

Thomas L. Bellissimo

Key Special Effects

Charles Belardinelli

JEX-FX-Cloud Tank Effects

Gary Platek

Moth Puppeteer

Michael T. Lynch

Costume Design

Ha Nguyen

Wardrobe Supervisor

Christopher J. Kristoff

Make-up

Michael "Mic"

Tomasino

Sheryl Leigh Ptak

K. J. Dolvik

Special Make-up Effects

Creator:

Greg Cannom

Prosthetics:

Sheryl Leigh Ptak

Hairstylists

Nina Paskowitz

Cheryl A. Markowitz

Title Design

Phill Norman

Titles/Opticals

Pacific Title

Howard Anderson Co.

Music

Randy Edelman

Music Performed by

The Irish Film

Orchestra

Music Conductor

Randy Edelman

Orchestrations

Ralph Ferraro

Music Supervisor

Bonnie Greenberg

Music Editor

John La Salandra

Songs/Music Extracts

"Cuban Pete" by José

Norman, performed

by Jim Carrey, Angie

Jarée; "I Could Only

Whisper Your Name"

by Harry Connick Jr.,

Ramsey McLean,

performed by Harry

Connick Jr.; "This

Business of Love"

by Phil Roy, Howie

Hersh, Nicholas Klein,

performed by Domino;

"Let the Good Times

Roll" by Sam Theard,

Fleecie Moore,

performed by

Fishbone; "Hey,

Pachuco" by Royal

Crown Revue, Eddie

Nichols, performed

by Royal Crown Revue;

"Gee Baby, Ain't I Good

to You" by Don

Redman, Andy Razaff,

performed by Susan

Boyd; "Who's That

Man" by Jermaine

Dupri, Manuel Seal,

Latosha Scott, Tamika

Scott, performed by

Xscape; "You Would

Be My Baby" by Keith

Thomas, Phil Galdston,

performed by Vanessa

Williams; "Bounce

Around" by Dwayne

Wiggins, Raphael

Beau Lotterman
Megaphone Cop
Ivory Ocean
Mayor Tilton
Robert O'Reilly
The Figure
Louie Ortiz
Coco Bongo Valet
Jeremy Roberts
Bobby the Bouncer
Eamonn Roche
Mr Dickey
Randi Ruimy
Screaming Woman
Benjamin J. Stein
Dr Neuman
Nils Allen Stewart
Orlando
Chris Taylor
Coco Bongo Cop
Wendy Walsh
Herself
Meadow Williams
Pebbles
Max
Milo the Dog
Aurora Allain-Drinco
Andre E. Carthen
Kerijo Chapman
Maria Cina
Leslie Cook
Carla Earle
Joaquin Escamilla
Anne Fletcher
Gary Franco
Jennifer S. Garrett
W. Robert Gaynor
Deano Georgio

Brett Heine
Michael Higgins
Melissa Horley
Gene Montoya
Richard Montoya
Lisa Nunziella
Art Palmer
Nathan Prevost
Daryl Richardson
Amy Tinkham
Natalie Tocknell
Andrea Paige Wilson
Darrel Wright
Dancers
James Achor
David Mondo Dorame
Edwin Nichols
Scott Steen
Adam Stern
Jamie Stern
Mark Stern
The Coco Bongo Band

9,088 feet
101 minutes

Dolby stereo
In colour
Foto-Kem
Prints by
Film House

Underwater workers in the harbour near Edge City stumble upon an ancient chest and accidentally open it, releasing an ancient wooden mask. That day, dweebish bank clerk Stanley Ipikiss finally gets a break – or seemingly so – when the beautiful Tina Carlyle walks into his bank and requests his help. As she flirts with him, however, she secretly aims a camera at the bank's vault, watched far away by Dorian, a gangster planning a robbery. Ipikiss agrees to accompany his friend Charlie to the Coco Bongo, a new elite nightclub. After work, Stanley finds his car dismantled in the sleazy auto repair shop where he left it, and must use instead the shop's antiquated 'loaner'. He is left out in the cold by the club's surly bouncers, and humiliated in front of Tina, who is the Coco Bongo's star chanteuse. On the way home, Stanley spots what looks like a body floating in the river; it turns out to be a mass of flotsam, in which he finds the mask.

Back in his apartment, Stanley tries the mask on, and is instantly transformed into The Mask, a zoot-suited, green-faced cartoon figure with the superhuman ability to do just about anything. Stanley/The Mask wreaks havoc on his landlady, his car mechanics, Dorian's bank-robbing cohorts, and the dance floor of the Coco Bongo.

By day, Ipikiss is hung over, addicted to the mask's power. By night, The Mask rules fearlessly; when the police eventually corner him, he dives into a swinging mambo number, hypnotising the massed cops. Eventually Stanley is kidnapped by Dorian, who tries the mask on, becoming a green-headed, intensely evil version of himself. Dorian's thugs then deposit Stanley at the police station, where he is quickly arrested. Later at the Coco Bongo, Dorian plans to blow up the nightclub and Tina with it, but Stanley – with the help of his Jack Russell terrier Milo – escapes from custody, steals

the mask back and saves the day. United with Tina, he flings the mask into the river, only for Milo to retrieve it...

Every inch the comic book, *The Mask* bears witness to both the glories and the shortcomings of that literary genre more eloquently than any movie ever has. As dull-witted and straitjacketed by cliché as it is visually hellzapoppin, the film may be a watershed moment in the cultural current that looks to loot the baby-boomer memory banks for recyclable cinematic ideas. Cartoons have breached the reality web of live-action movies once and for all, but to what end? No sooner does Jim Carrey don his magical mask than the ghosts of Tex Avery and Chuck Jones are summoned from the void and given hi-tech life; still, the result is curiously unamusing. Regardless of its astounding computer-animated effects, *The Mask* seems mundane, half-hearted and less engaged by its own chaos than your average eight-year-old, for whom the movie seems particularly intended. It's more *Beethoven* than *Beetlejuice*, and no matter how much *The Mask* himself advocates gleeful anarchy, the film is as safe and routine as an afternoon with *Lamb Chop*.

It seemed a sure thing. Suddenly a major commodity since the unforeseen success of *Ace Ventura Pet Detective*, Jim Carrey is a rapturously idiosyncratic film persona, all double-jointed weirdness and mock game-show host delivery. In *Ace Ventura*, and in his extraordinary TV work (notably in the comedy series *In Living Colour*), Carrey has already revealed himself to be as close to the free-associative tornado of *The Mask*'s central conception as any actor alive (he makes Robin Williams look

constipated by comparison). So the casting seemed fortuitous, and this fully-morphed adaptation of the Dark Horse comic was anticipated with understandable eagerness.

All the more disappointing, then, that here Carrey is dishwater-dull and, as *The Mask*, is so cluttered up with computerised accoutrements that we barely recognise him. At times, anybody at all could be behind the make-up and exploding props. More vitally, director Charles (aka Chuck) Russell, whose previous credits include *A Nightmare on Elm Street 3: Dream Warriors* and the already-forgotten remake of *The Blob*, seems lost at sea trying to shape the simple material into comedy. Most of *The Mask* is ruefully unfunny: the jokes are strained ("That doesn't sound good to me" – "What does sound good to you?" – "Breakfast"), the sight gags are Tex Avery retreads, and the timing is way off. The result is uninspired and witless, no matter how cyclonic the visuals. Indeed, the effects themselves are hopelessly derivative. Unlike the crack creative team behind *Who Framed Roger Rabbit?*, Russell and co rarely bother to instil new life into the 40-year-old tropes of Avery at his peak. Avery's bulging eyeballs, howling wolves and entropic action are simply aped here. If you've seen 'Swing Shift Cinderella' (1945), you've already seen *The Mask*'s most furious visual fillips, but in two dimensions.

If you're eight, these are all pointless quibbles – *The Mask*'s simple story and goofy showboating are bound to excite the tyros in the audience without ever interesting their parents. Similarly, the brazen set-up for a sequel may get the pre-teen demographic slavering in anticipation. Adults, however, will know better.

Michael Atkinson



Reckless eyeballs: Jim Carrey

Mina Tannenbaum

France 1993

Director: Martine Dugowson

Certificate
12
Distributor
Mayfair Entertainment
Production Company
IMA Films
In association with
UGC Images/Christian
Bourgois
Productions/La Sept
Cinéma/FCC/SFPC
(France)/Les Films de
L'Etang (Belgium)/Belbo
Film Productions
(Netherlands)
With the participation
of Canal+/Soficas
Sofinergie 2/Sofinergie
3/Centre National de la
Cinématographie/RTBF
Télévision Belges/
Eurimages
Executive Producers
Georges Benayoun
Paul Rozenberg
Belgium:
Anne-Dominique
Toussaint
Pascal Jadecewicz
Producer
Georges Benayoun
Associate Producer
Yves Marmion
Production Manager
Oury Milshtein
Location Manager
Françoise Lombaers
Post-production
Martine Traks
Francis Doré
Assistant Directors
Charli Beleteau
Eric Zaouali
Casting
Gigi Akoka
Screenplay
Martine Dugowson
Continuity
Véronique Heuchenne
Director of Photography
Dominique Chapuis
Editors
Martine Barraqué
Dominique Gallieni
Art Director
Philippe Chiffre
Set Designer
Pierre Decraen
Set Decorator
Jean-Claude Bemels
**Paintings/Sculptures/
Pastels**
Vladimir Velichovik
Laurence Gillain
Benoît Raffray
John Walter Araque
Dominique
Vandenberg
Models
Emmanuelle Lemaire
Frédéric Demey
Costume Design
Yan Tax
Costume Supervisor
Marie Lauwers
Make-up Supervisor
Nancy Baudoux
Hair Supervisor
Agathe Dupuis
Music
Peter Chase
Music Director
Konstantin Krmetz
Music Performed by
Moscow Philharmonic
Orchestra
Songs
"That's the Way It
Goes", "Lonesome
Slow", "The Lion and
the Tiger", "Rainy Day
Rock" by Peter Chase;
"Les Filles de mon
pays" by Pierre Cour,
Jean Claudric, Gaston

Ghrenassla, performed
by Enrico Macias;
"J'attendrai" by
D. Olivieri, N. Rastelli,
L. Poterat, performed
by Rina Ketty;
"Il venait d'avoir 18
ans" by P. Sevrin,
S. Lebratt, P. Aurlat,
J. Bouchety, performed
by Dalida; "Put the
Blame on Mame" by
Alan Roberts, Doris
Fisher, performed by
Rita Hayworth; "Pour
l'amour du risque"
by M. Snow, J.C. Well;
"La Valse de Mélody" by
Serge Gainsbourg; "J'en
ai tant vu" by René
Rourand, Michel Emer
Choreography
Lucia Coppola
Sound
Alain Villeval
Supervising Sound Editor
Laurent Quaglio
Sound Mixer
Jean-François Auger
Sound Effects
Jacky Dufour

Cast
Romane Bohringer
Mina Tannenbaum
Elsa Zylberstein
Ethel Bénégu
Florence Thomassin
Cousin
Nils Tavernier
François
Stéphane Slima
Didier
Chantal Krief
Daisy
Jany Gastaldi
Gisèle
Dimitri Furdul
Henri
Eric Dosses
Serge
Jean-Philippe Ecoffey
Jacques Dana
Harry Cleven
Gérard
Alexandre von Sivers
Devas
Artus de Penguern
Naschich
Hugues Quester
Choumichère
Tony Cecchinato
Gypsy
Gwenola de Luze
Muriel
Julien Kafaro
Man in the Street
Elise Benroubi
Mina, age 10
Shirley Kleinman
Ethel, age 10
Sabrina Germeau
Mina, age 5
Elodie Grosbris
Ethel, age 5
Blanche Aubree
Sylvia Antrop
Massimo Bellini
Mina Bulbinder
Daniel Charlier
Peter Chase
Yves Claessem
Philippe Chiffre
Bobby Pacha
Lucia Coppola
Bertie Cortez
Marielle Deschamps
Stéphanie Degroot
Philippe Drukman
Pierre Dumaine
Muriel Esser
Daphné Eyles
Jacqueline Ghaye
Madame Gonzales
Serge Gozlan

Richard Guez
 Denis Grumbach
 Bob Ingaro
 Anita Jans
 Jean Keutericks
 Jacques Korman
 Simon Lafon
 Jean-Claude Lachkar
 Louis Langlet
 Gaëtan Malrait
 Eva Mazauc
 Jocya Milshtein
 Huguette Ouaknine
 Martine Cohen
 Françoise De Pauw
 Francis Paguet
 Isabelle Quadens
 Marion Quoilin
 Rachel Sabbah
 Jean-Louis Shille

Laurent Scano
 Sarah Silvera
 Martin Stameschkin
 Cathy Tastet
 Joseph Tibi Tillie
 Jean-Pierre Valère
 Isabelle Vander Velde
 Christian Vermeulen
 Alan Villeval
 Rywka Wajsbrot
 Emillie Wolitshik
 Alice Xanadu

11,537 feet
 128 minutes
 Dolby stereo
 In colour
 Subtitles

The story of Mina Tannenbaum is told in flashback after her death. Mina was born in Paris in 1958 in a Jewish milieu on the same day as Ethel Bénégui. The two girls meet at a ballet class in 1968 and despite their differences (Mina is thin and difficult, Ethel plump and placid) become close friends. In 1974, Mina has become a gifted though shy art student. She falls in love with François, a fellow student. Partly because of her shyness, her love remains unrequited. Her relationship with her mother, a traumatised concentration camp survivor, is strained. Ethel falls in love with Didier, a pianist. On the point of having sex, she is overcome with embarrassment at her 'fat' body.

By 1989 Mina, transformed from ugly duckling to trendy beauty, is a successful artist living with the handsome Serge. Ethel tries to establish a career in journalism while hiding from her mother the fact that she is living with a 'goy', Gérard. Mina sells three paintings to a well known art dealer, Jacques Dana, who flirts with her. Ethel gets a job on an arts magazine by impersonating Mina, who is shocked by Ethel's unscrupulousness; soon Ethel's journalistic career blossoms. An accident leaves Mina's face scarred and her paintings don't sell any more; she takes copying work. Ethel's mother is terminally ill and accuses her daughter of killing her with her lifestyle. Wracked by guilt, Ethel advertises for a Jewish husband in a newspaper, and Jacques Dana, amused, replies.

Although Ethel's mother dies and the marriage does not take place, Mina feels betrayed and stops seeing Ethel. Serge leaves her. Mina's father is mentally ill and her mother sells the family flat; she feels increasingly lonely and desperate. Later, she hears that Ethel is back with Gérard and that they have a baby. She engineers a chance meeting, and they decide to spend the following Saturday together. Ethel postpones the meeting because of a holiday. This triggers Mina's deepest depression and she kills herself. We learn that Ethel's baby girl is called Mina.

Martine Dugowson's first feature is an unusual, sometimes uneven mixture of comedy and melodrama. Yet it is a film of immense charm and humour which works surprisingly well. If *Mina Tannenbaum*'s central theme of friendship has a universal ring to it, the film also occupies

that relatively rare territory in French cinema, the mainstream woman's film. The centrality of the two women, their tribulations (relationships with mothers and men and with each other, the traumas of emergent sexuality) and the disposability of the men, all foreground women's experiences and desires. The oscillation between sameness and difference at the core of female friendship also serves as a comment on female identity, especially in relation to the mother. In this respect, a fascinating aspect of *Mina Tannenbaum* is the way the girls rebel against their mothers, yet end up in similar positions to them. Mina loathes her mother's morbidity, but commits suicide; Ethel is stifled and repelled by her Jewish mother, who is forever pushing her to conform, yet she ends up with a man and a baby.

The bitter-sweet observation of adolescent growing pains in the streets of Montmartre inevitably evokes Truffaut, while the female friendship and period reconstruction prompt comparisons with Diane Kurys. But although Dugowson's recreation of the aesthetic horrors of 1970s platform shoes, floppy hats, unflattering crushed velvet dresses, ghastly haircuts and so forth is very funny, she keeps period details to a minimum and manages to suggest the decade economically through a knowing use of French popular singers such as Enrico Macias, Dalida and Serge Gainsbourg. Mina's descent into failure and loneliness is far from the universe of these two directors, and a departure from the classic woman's coming of age picture. Whereas the genre leads us to expect both women to grow (as in Kurys' *Diabolo Menthe* and *Coup de foudre*) through their various traumas, Mina's tragic ending is not redeemed and her suicide is truly shocking. And where some will see the divergent trajectories of the heroines as realistic – Ethel the pragmatist is a survivor, Mina the tortured artist a loser – feminist spectators will also see Ethel, the conformist with a good job, man and baby, survive Mina the transgressor, whose art, hitherto a *raison d'être*, suddenly becomes meaningless. But, as with classic Hollywood melodrama, however much Mina, and occasionally Ethel, are victims, *Mina Tannenbaum* is pleasurable because of the strength of Bohringer and Zylberstein's performances.

Romane Bohringer, on whose name this film was probably picked up for UK distribution, builds on her performance in Cyril Collard's *Les Nuits fauves* and Claude Miller's *L'Accompagnatrice*. She elaborates on her well-established persona of highly strung and hypersensitive young woman, whose success in France is associated with its appeal to a young generation (Charlotte Gainsbourg, considered for the part, occupies a similar terrain). She manages however to flesh out what already verges on type casting by displaying a fine sense of comedy, especially in the early scenes. The relative newcomer Zylberstein (previously seen in Maurice Pialat's *Van Gogh*) is also impressive and



Talking from the heart: Romane Bohringer

manages well the physical and mood changes demanded by her role. Above all, the two actresses form a great duo.

Mina Tannenbaum's depiction of the Jewish petite bourgeoisie of the Montmartre area provoked strong reactions in France. It is not difficult to see why, since the mothers, the traditional central figures of Jewish culture, are turned into monsters. While such stereotypes serve to highlight the generation gap they also occasionally jar with the naturalistic project of the film. Ethel's mother eating chocolates and watching TV in bed is very funny, while her emotional blackmail on her death bed is unsettling. Similarly, Jacques Dana, the gallery owner, is rather crudely drawn, as is the arrogant art teacher (though Hughes Quester turns this part into a wonderful cameo).

Ultimately what awkwardness and lack of subtlety there may be are compensated for by the sense of enthusiasm and experiment that permeates the film – surprisingly, in view of its downbeat ending. Dugowson uses a number of devices which provide an ironic distance, while not being in any way avant-garde. The film is framed by scenes featuring a cousin who does not appear in the main story, nurses break into a dance when the girls are born, and at various points characters – the mothers, the art dealer, the art school lecturer, dead grandfathers 'in the sky' – address the camera directly with details of Mina's life or comments on the action. Occasionally, the grown-up Mina confronts herself as a child or the two young women are juxtaposed with their idealised visions of themselves in the same shot. *Mina Tannenbaum* may not be autobiographical, but Dugowson (distantly related to the director Maurice Dugowson) is the same age as her protagonists, and is clearly talking from the heart about an era and a milieu she knows.

Ginette Vincendeau

Mr Jones

USA 1994

Director: Mike Figgis

Certificate
 15
 Distributor
 Columbia TriStar
 Production Company
 Rastar
 For TriStar Pictures
 Executive Producers
 Richard Gere
 Jerry A. Baerwitz
 Producer
 Alan Greisman
 Debra Greenfield
 Production Supervisor
 Greg Lazzaro
 Production Office
 Co-ordinator
 Christine A. Baer
 Unit Production Manager
 Jerry A. Baerwitz
 Location Manager
 Karen White
 Assistant Directors
 J. Stephen Buck
 Ruthie Redfern
 Frank Bueno
 Casting
 Carrie Frazier
 Shani Ginsberg
 Story
 Eric Roth
 Screenplay
 Eric Roth
 Michael Cristofer
 Script Supervisor
 Sharron Reynolds
 Director of Photography
 Juan Ruiz Anchia
 Camera Operator
 Pernell Tyus
 Steadicam Operator
 Anasta N. Michos
 James Muro
 Alan Caso
 Editor
 Tom Rolf
 Additional:
 B. J. Sears
 Production Designer
 Waldemar Kalinowski
 Art Director
 Larry Fulton
 Set Design
 Gae Buckley
 Set Decorator
 Florence Fellman
 Special Effects
 Co-ordinator
 M. Kam Cooney
 Special Effects
 Edward Kennedy
 Costume Design
 Rita Ryack
 Costume Supervisor
 Nanrose Buchman
 Jennifer Lax
 Make-up
 Key:
 Tracey Gray
 Tom Lucas
 Hairstylist
 Key:
 Edward St. George
 Laura Connolly
 Titles
 Sony Pictures
 Imageworks
 Opticals
 Cinema Research
 Corporation
 Music
 Maurice Jarre
 Music Performed by
 Solo Pianist:
 Gwendoline Mok
 Executive Music Producer
 Tim Sexton
 Music Editor
 Dan Carlin Snr
 Music Consultant
 Jeffrey Pollack
 Songs/Music Extracts
 "I Got You (I Feel
 Good)" by and
 performed by James
 Brown; "Naima" by
 and performed by John
 Coltrane; "Feel the

Groove" by Robert
 Tillis, Carlo Zanello,
 Jon St. James,
 performed by The
 Rhythm; "Yo Baby Yo"
 by R. Barber, T. Lewis,
 A. Constant, R. Isaacs,
 L. Mallison, performed
 by Party Posse; "It's
 My Business" by
 L. Haggard Jnr,
 performed by
 Mr Lee; "Symphony
 No.9 Choral" by
 Ludwig van Beethoven,
 performed by Joan
 Sutherland, Marilyn
 Horne, James King,
 Martti Talvela, Wiener
 Staatsopernchor,
 Wiener
 Philharmoniker
 Supervising Sound Editor
 Fred J. Brown
 Michele Sharp
 Sound Editors
 Stan Siegel
 Victor Lackey
 Clay Collins
 Dave Williams
 Mark LaPointe
 Bob O'Brien
 Supervising ADR Editor
 David B. Cohn
 Sound Mixer
 Gene S. Cantamessa
 ADR Mixer
 Howard London
 Foley Mixer
 Jackson Schwartz
 Re-recordists Mixers
 Sergio Reyes
 Gregory H. Watkins
 B. Tennyson
 Sebastian II
 Foley
 Joe Sabella
 Zane Bruce
 Stunt Co-ordinator
 Gary Hymes

Cast
 Richard Gere
 Mr Jones
 Lena Olin
 Libbie
 Anne Bancroft
 Dr Catherine Holland
 Tom Irwin
 Patrick
 Delroy Lindo
 Howard
 Bruce Altman
 David
 Lauren Tom
 Amanda
 Lisa Malkiewicz
 Susan
 Thomas Kopache
 Mr Wilson
 Peter Jurasik
 Dr Rosen
 Leon Singer
 Hot Dog Vendor
 Anna Maria Horsford
 Judge Harris
 Edward Padilla
 Bellboy
 Baha Jackson
 Son
 Epitha Harris
 Daughter
 Anne Lange
 Therapist
 Kelli Williams
 Kelli
 Mark Lowenthal
 Richard
 Joyce Guy
 Marjorie Lovett
 Nurses
 Sal Lopez
 Henry
 Scott Thomson
 Conrad
 Bill Moseley
 Worker

Barry Neikrug
Piano Salesman
Thomas Mikal Ford
Arnie/Violent Patient
Lela Ivey
Lisa
Valente Rodriguez
Orderly
Dinah Lenney
Registrar
Laura O'Loughlin
Young Girl
Marguerite Pini
Girlfriend
Peter Vogt
Bank Supervisor
Deryn Warren
Saleswoman
David Brisbin
Mr Warner
Dana Lee
Mr Chang
Irene Tsu
Mrs Chang
Kathy Kinney
Homeless Lady

Annie McEnroe
Crying Woman
Maury Efrons
Crying Man
Albert Henderson
John Durbin
Patients
Roman Cisneros
Public Defender
Lucinda Jenney
Christine
Donald Barra
Orchestra Conductor
Taylor Negron
Motorcycle Man

10,249 feet
114 minutes

Dolby stereo
Colour
Technicolor

A man turns up at a building site, saying he is a carpenter in search of work. The foreman tells him there is none going, but the man persists and is eventually allowed to join the rest of the crew on the roof of a house under construction. He has scarcely started his job than he walks along a high ledge, announcing he wants to fly. He is saved from falling by his colleague, Howard, and taken to a mental hospital. Here, as he lies drugged on his bed, he first sees Dr Libbie Bowen. He tells her his name is Jones.

Despite Bowen's misgivings, Jones discharges himself. He heads straight for the bank, withdraws all his cash, and goes on a lunch date with the cashier, dispensing \$100 notes to all and sundry. The date ends with him taking the cashier to a Beethoven concert. He marches up to the stage and starts conducting the orchestra himself. For his efforts, he is rushed back to the hospital. Bowen realises he is a manic depressive and tries to have him committed. However, at court, he appears lucid and charming to the judge, who lets him go free. He hitches a ride back to town with Bowen. They stop on the beach for a snack and soon strike up a rapport. Shortly after, Jones readmits himself, hoping to find a medical cure for his condition. As his treatment proceeds, he and Dr Bowen grow closer. He saves her life when another patient attacks her.

The treatment continues, without much success. Bowen discovers from the bank cashier that Jones had talked about being in love with a woman called Ellen, a musician who had died many years before. Bowen investigates, discovers Ellen is alive and well, and confronts him with the information. Jones, furious at her prying, discharges himself and walks off. Bowen pursues him, and admits her deep feelings for him. They embrace and become lovers.

Bowen realises she has committed a serious breach of professional etiquette. Egged on by a jealous colleague, she asks to be removed from the Jones case and later tenders her resignation. Jones is transferred to another hospital, but again manages to get himself discharged, steals a motor-

bike and rides round to collect his carpentry tools from Howard. His friend alerts the hospital that he is worried that Jones is about to try his 'flying trick' again. Bowen is notified, and rushes round, to find Jones perched on the roof. Eventually, she manages to lure him back from the brink.

In its original cut, *Mr Jones* was evidently a troublesome case: a surly, downbeat fable in strong need of some Hollywood-style therapy before it could be released. ("It's a piece of shit," was studio executive Ray Stark's reported response after a preview screening.) In the doctored version, what started as the story of a manic depressive emerges as something more akin to a conventional melodrama, where the patient's mental state is merely another barrier the couple must overcome in the name of true romance. The posters give the game away: "Everything That Makes Him Dangerous Makes Him Love Her Even More". While this process of sanitisation doesn't make for a particularly satisfactory film, it seems perversely in keeping with the material. "What do you want? To make me ordinary?" Mr Jones barks at his psychiatrist lover. It's a question director Mike Figgis could equally well ask of the studios.

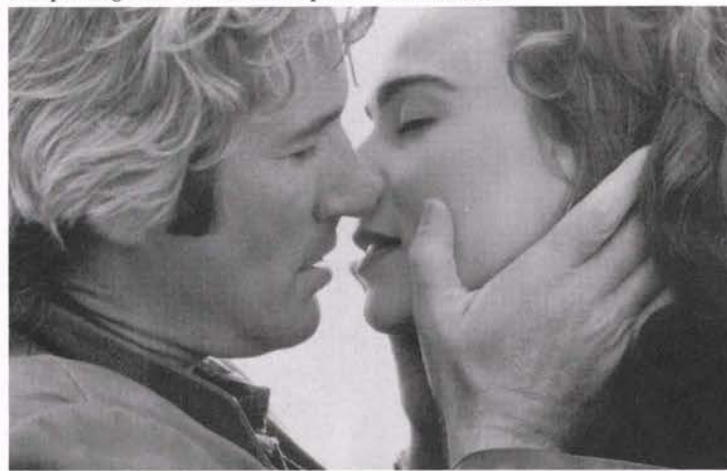
There's no denying that *Mr Jones* is a botched, chimerical affair, yanking art-house psychodrama and upbeat love story together, and invoking all the usual clichés about the inspired madman: Jones played Mozart at the age of three, had read "everything" by the time he was twelve, was "the centre of the universe" at 18, and in a mental asylum by his mid-20s. It's hardly the most original of resumé's, and seems all the more hackneyed when combined with the fact that he is portrayed as a blue-collar type, ostensibly a carpenter. Sometimes, he even seems like a composite of Jack Nicholson's famous early roles: the oilman/pianist of *Five Easy Pieces* or the not-so-mad McMurphy of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. Lena Olin's psychiatrist bears an uncanny resemblance to Bergman in *Spellbound*, and the revelation of the traumatic incident in Jones' past, is as perfunctory as they come. Certain scenes, notably Jones and Bowen's embrace in the pouring rain to the accompani-

ment of Richard Clayderman-style music on the soundtrack, are nothing short of embarrassing.

Figgis' own cut of the movie is unlikely to see the light of day. As matters stand, it's hard to spot the joins and work out where his influence begins and ends. (One thing is for certain: the music – always an intrinsic part of a Figgis film – is not as he wished it.) However, even in its present, bowdlerized state, *Mr Jones* has considerable fascination. At least, the premise is ambitious. And Jones is a highly appropriate role for Gere. Right from *Looking For Mr Goodbar* onwards, he has always been prepared to tackle characters who strain toward psychosis and blur the lines between hero and villain; to play gigolos, pimps and delinquents. He starts *Mr Jones* in manic groove, taking his cue from the James Brown song, 'I Feel Good', he wakes up to. Within minutes, he is strutting his way along the narrow ledge of a high building, stretching his arms towards the planes overhead and threatening to fly. Then, to top that, he steals the baton from a conductor at a classical concert and steers the orchestra and chorus through some rousing, up-tempo Beethoven. There's even a parody of his part in *Pretty Woman*, where he withdraws all his money from the bank, takes the cashier on an afternoon date, and dispenses \$100 notes wherever he goes. ("It's like trying to stop a space shuttle with a rubber band," somebody observes.) In these exhilarating early sequences, his antics are matched by the vertiginous camerawork. Unfortunately, though, he is only allowed to give half a performance: as his downside, his depressions, are largely skirted over, it is made to seem that his pranks have nothing to do with his condition, and are little more than showy histrionics.

It is all too easy to take refuge in the *Magnificent Ambersons* myth and blame a film's shortcomings on the studio butchers. Figgis' forthcoming *The Browning Version*, after all, manages to be dreary without any outside help. Still, for anybody who saw his work with Gere on *Internal Affairs*, there must be an overwhelming suspicion that *Mr Jones*, in its present form, is scarcely the picture Figgis set out to make.

Geoffrey Macnab



Merely manic: Richard Gere, Lena Olin

Speed

USA 1994

Director: Jan De Bont

Certificate
15
Distributor
20th Century Fox
Production Company
20th Century Fox
Executive Producer
Ian Bryce
Producer
Mark Gordon
Co-producer
Allison Lyon
Production Supervisor
Susan Robbins Newirth
Production Co-ordinator
Gretchen Van Zeebroeck
Unit Production Manager
Ian Bryce
Location Managers
George Herthel
James M. McCabe
2nd Unit Director
Alexander Witt
Assistant Directors
David Sardi
Maggie Murphy
David Hallinan
Casting
Risa Bramon Garcia
Billy Hopkins
Voice:
Barbara Harris
Associate:
Laurel Miller
NY Associate:
Suzanne Smith
Screenplay
Graham Yost
Script Supervisors
Wilma Garscadden-Gahret
2nd Unit:
Robin Skelton
Director of Photography
Andrzej Bartkowiak
Additional Directors of Photography
Subway:
David Drzewiecki
Elevator:
Garry Waller
Camera Operators
Michael Scott
Terry Bowen
2nd Unit:
Bill Asman
Steadicam Operator
Greg Lundsgaard
Special Visual Effects
Sony Pictures
Imageworks
Visual Effects Supervisor
Boyd Shermis
Visual Effects
Executive Producer:
Bill Birrell
Producer:
Mickey McGovern
Production Co-ordinator:
Julia L. Rivas
Supervisor:
Ron Brinkmann
Previsualisation
Main Titles:
Frank Foster
Cat Chapman
Editor
John Wright
Production Designer
Jackson De Govia
Art Director
John R. Jensen
Set Design
Louis Mann
Peter Romero
Stan Tropp
Set Decorator
K. C. Fox
Set Dressers
Douglas James McKay
Joseph L. Byrne
Mark Davidson
Jim Scolari
Gaylene West
Storyboard Artist
Giacomo Ghiazza

Subway Miniatures/ Set Design
Sessums Engineering
Jack Sessums
Photographic Consultant:
Michael O. Sajbel
Unit Manager:
Gary R. Maxwell
Elevator Miniatures
Grant McCune Design
Supervisor:
Grant McCune
Head of Design:
Smokey Stover
Chief Modelmaker:
Clark Schaffer
Mechanical Design:
Nicholas Esposto
Special Effects
Co-ordinator
John Frazier
Special Effects Foremen
David Amborn
Rocky Gehr
Costume Design
Ellen Mirojnick
Associate:
Cynthia Hamilton
Costume Supervisor
Anthony J. Scarano
Make-up Artists
Norman Leavitt
Pete Altobelli
Special Make-up Effects
The Burman Studio
Hairstylists
Gus Le Pre
Susan Maust
Titles/Opticals
Pacific Title
Misc
Mark Mancina
Additional Music
John Van Tongeren
Music Performed by
Bruce Fowler
Ladd McIntosh
Yvonne S. Moriarty
Soloists:
Mike Fisher
Alan Holdsworth
Music Conductor
Don Harper
Orchestrations
Don Harper
Bruce Fowler
Ladd McIntosh
Yvonne Moriarty
Executive Music Producer
Ralph Sall
Music Consultant
Curt Sobel
Supervising Sound Editors
Stephen Hunter Flick
Dialogue:
Gary S. Gerlich
Dialogue Editors
Greg Gerlich
Elliot Koretz
Pieter S. Hubbard
Marvin Walowitz
Hal Sanders
Supervising ADR Editor
Victoria Rose Sampson
ADR Editors
Linda Folk
David Spence
Kay Rose
Beth Bergeron
Sound Mixer
David R. B. MacMillan
Music Mixers/Recordists
Jay Rifkin
Alan Meyerson
ADR Mixers
Darcy Kite
Robert Deschaine
Foley Mixers
Eric Gotthelf
Bruce Bell
David Alstadter
Sound Re-recording Mixers
Steve Maslow
Gregg Landaker
Bob Beemer
Sergio Reyes

B. Tennyson
 Sebastian III
 Ezra Dweck
Sound Effects Editors
 David Bartlett
 Paul Berolzheimer
 John Dunn
 Donald Flick
 Judea Flick
 Avram D. Gold
 Warren Hamilton Jr
 Gregory Hedgepath
 Patricio Libenson
 Kirk Schuler
 Dave Stone
 Bruce Stubblefield
Sound Effects Recorderist
 Eric Potter
Foley Artists
 Ken Dufva
 David Lee Fein
 Joan Rowe
 Catherine Rowe
 Dan O'Connell
 John Cucci
Technical Advisers
 Call The Cops
 Randy Walker
 Ed Arneson
Stunt Co-ordinator
 Gary M. Hymes

Cast
 Keanu Reeves
 Jack Traven
 Dennis Hopper
 Howard Payne
 Sandra Bullock
 Annie
 Joe Morton
 Captain McMahon
 Jeff Daniels
 Harry
 Alan Rick
 Stephens
 Glenn Plummer
 Jaguar Owner
 Richard Lineback
 Norwood
 Beth Grant
 Helen
 Hawthorne James
 Sam
 Carlos Carrasco
 Ortiz
 David Kriegel
 Terry
 Natsuko Ohama
 Mrs Kamino
 Daniel Villarreal
 Ray
 Simone Gad
 Loretta Jean Crudup
 Sherri Villanueva
 Bus Passengers
 Margaret Medina
 Robin
 Jordan Lund
 Bagwell

Robert Mailhouse
 Young Executive
Patrick Fischler
 Friend of Executive
Patrick John Hurley
 CEO
Susan Barnes
 Executive
Richard Dano
 Swat Driver
Michael Sottile
 Swat Cop
Jane Crawley
 Anne O'Sullivan
 Baby Carriage Women
Beau Starr
 Commissioner
John Capodice
 Bob
Tommy Rosales Jr
 Vince
James Dufmont
 Workman
Antonio Mora
Patty Toy
 News Anchors
Todd Gordon
 News Cameraman
Bruce Wright
Mark Kriski
Dagny Hultgreen
 Reporters
Richard Schiff
 Train Driver
Joseph Carberry
 Cop
Sandy Martin
 Bartender
Neisha Folkes-LéMelle
 Mrs McMahon
Jim Mapp
Milton Quon
Sonia Jackson
Carmen Williams
Paula Montes
Loyda Ramos
Julia Vera
Marylou Lim
 Additional Bus
 Passengers
Brian K. Grant
Barry Kramer
Robin McKee
Paige Goodman
Christina Fitzgerald
Tara Thomas
CeCe Tsou
Michael Fujimoto
Richard Gelb
 Elevator Passengers

10,421 feet
116 minutes

Dolby stereo
In colour
DeLuxe
Anamorphic

● Demented ex-cop Howard Payne kills a security guard and booby-traps a lift in an LA skyscraper, demanding a huge ransom. SWAT team members Jack Traven and his partner Harry arrive and pull off a daring rescue. Realising that Payne is still in the building, they track him down, but he captures Harry, and Jack can only save his partner by shooting him in the leg. The bomb goes off and Payne is assumed to have been killed. Jack is in a cafe with a bus-driver friend when his bus outside blows up. Jack receives a telephone warning from Payne about a bomb on another bus, which will be armed when the bus goes over 50mph and will detonate if its speed drops below that level. Jack rushes across town, boards the bus and explains the situation. The passengers panic. One, a criminal, waves a gun to force the bus to stop. In the struggle to disarm him, the driver is shot. Annie, a young passenger, takes the wheel and the police navigate a safe route through traffic while Payne watches the drama on television.

He gives his permission by phone for the injured man to leave the bus. An elderly woman tries to leap off after him but falls to her death. The bus approaches an unfinished section of the highway, but Annie manages to leap the gap and reach the airport, where they circle the runway while Jack struggles to disarm the bomb. Harry finds Payne's home, but it is booby-trapped and he and several other policemen are killed. Eventually, Jack realises that Payne has a camera on board the bus. He gets a TV technician to make a video loop of the passengers sitting in their seats which is replayed to Payne while the passengers are lifted off. Jack and Annie escape seconds before the bus hits an empty airplane and explodes.

The police deliver the ransom, planning to trap Payne, but he outsmarts them, kidnapping Annie and escaping on the subway with Jack in hot pursuit. The train driver is killed, Annie is chained to a post and Jack and Payne fight it out on the roof until Payne is decapitated by a signal light. The train crashes through into the street, and Jack and Annie survive.

● *Speed's* uninspiring title sequence gives little clue to the thrills that are to follow. In this film the cavalry arrives in the first three minutes when Keanu Reeves' cop car comes flying over the hill. His partner Jeff Daniels may not be an obvious choice to save a lift-load of passengers from death at the hands of crazed explosives expert Dennis Hopper, but with Reeves' help save them he does, with as much wear and tear on the audience's nerves as on the buckling lift cables.

For all its breathless rush from one action set-piece to another, and its determination not to insult the intelligence with disaster-movie-style character development, *Speed* is strangely humanistic. The rescues – hapless passengers who only want to get from one place to another – are treated with indulgence. Reeves' calm, gum-chewing response to the feckless stupidity of the imperilled public is to see them as innocent bystanders who have every right to be saved by him.

First time director Jan De Bont, who cut his cinematic teeth as Paul Verhoeven's cameraman, has the latter's eye for kinetic excitement without his sadism. *Speed's* biggest shock, when the hurtling bus bears down on a pram and hits it, has a benign twist. And the climax is downright euphoric. Admittedly, there is nothing benign about Dennis Hopper, who does his psycho turn on auto-pilot. Reeves on the other hand, with *Little Buddha* just a bad memory, is a revelation, expanding on the action hero potential he demonstrated in *Point Break*. *Speed's* single Arnie-ism – reporting Hopper's final decapitation as "He lost his head" – is unworthy of Reeves, but by that time the audience is too busy picking pieces of its spine out of the cinema upholstery to notice.

Ben Thompson

Sugar Hill

USA 1993

Director: Leon Ichaso

Certificate
 18
Distributor
 Entertainment
Production Company
 Beacon Films presents
 A South Street
 Entertainment
 production
 For Ghizmost Pictures
Executive Producers
 Arman Bernstein
 Marc Abraham
 Tom Rosenberg
Producers
 Rudy Langlais
 Gregory Brown
Executive in Charge of Production
 Thomas A. Bliss
Line Producer
 Steven R. McGlothen
Production Executives
 Andre Lamal
 Caitlin M. Scanlon
Production Co-ordinators
 Michael Bell
 Carolyn Brodrick
 NY:
 Juliette Stenning
Unit Production Manager
 Steven R. McGlothen
Location Managers
 Larry Pearson
 NY:
 Brent Owens
Post-production Supervisor
 Hilarie Roope
Assistant Directors
 Barbara Carter
 Noga Isackson
 Frank Davis
 NY:
 Bruce Greenfield
 Roni Wheeler Poole
Casting
 Mary Gail Artz
 Barbara Cohen
 Associate:
 Mary Hidalgo
 NY Associate:
 Alysa Wishingrad
 ADR Voice:
 Barbara Harris
Screenplay
 Barry Michael Cooper
Script Supervisor
 Barbara Thaxton
Director of Photography
 Bojan Bazeli
Camera Operator
 Henry Lynk
Editor
 Gary Kerr
Production Designer
 Michael Helmy
Art Director
 J. Jergensen
Set Decorators
 Kathryn Peters
 NY:
 Elaine O'Donnell
Special Effects
 John Alexander
 Dick Albain
 Ed Albain
 Duncan Puett
 Jerry Winchell
 NY:
 Matt Vogel
Costume Design
 Eduardo Castro
Costume Supervisor
 Bruce Hogard
Make-up
 Lani Thompson
Hair
 Cliff Booker
Title Design
 Allen Ferro
Titles/Opticals
 Pacific Title
Music
 Terence Blanchard
Music Performed by
 The Terence Blanchard Quartet

Music Supervisors
 G. Marg Roswell
 Pilar McCurry
Music Editors
 Michael Linn
 Marty Wereski
 Alex Steyermark
Songs/Music Extracts
 "Don't Worry 'Bout Me"
 by Ted Koehler, Rube Bloom, performed by Duke Ellington and His Orchestra; "What Are You Under" by Kevin Clark, Donald Weekes, performed by Definition of Sound; "Worries" by Bobby Konders, Robert L. Stephens, performed by Screamie Dan; "Park Bench People" by Michael Troy, The Earthquake Brothers, performed by Freestyle Fellowship; "Khadijah" by J. Brown, E. Jones, J. Chavis, E. Lawson, performed by Dirt Nation; "Play My Funk" by Dwayne Wiggins, Erica Wiggins, performed by Simple E; "Your Ballad" by and performed by Stefan Karlsson; "Wisdom of a Fool" by Roy Alfred, Abner Silver; "Love T.K.O." by Gip Noble, Cecil Womack, Linda Womack; "Gonna LoveYou Right" by Keith Andes, Tim Harris, Ricky Jones, Warren Carey, performed by After 7; "Afro-Desiac" by Kahlil S. MacIntosh, Rodney Oliver, Houston B. Perry, Christopher L. Turner, performed by Afro-Plane; "His Eye is on the Sparrow", performed by Denetria Champ; "Just One More Day" by Otis Redding, Steve Cropper, McEvoy Robinson, performed by Otis Redding; "Hit the Boomz" by Kenny Diaz, John Yera, Louis Vega, performed by DBC; "Money" by LeBaron Frost, performed by Snowman; "Miles Blowin'" by Tina Harris, Ashley Hall, performed by Chaka Khan; "Pomp and Circumstance" by Edward Elgar
Choreography
 Ertha Robinson
Sound Design
 Tim Gedemer
Supervising Sound Editor
 Steve Williams
Dialogue Editors
 Cathie Speakman
 Terry Flyalko
Supervising ADR
 Joe Mayer
ADR Editor
 Jim Brookshire
Foley Editor
 Lew Goldstein
Sound Mixers
 Malcolm Morris
 NY:
 Rolf Pardula
ADR Mixer
 Terry O'Bright
ADR Recorderist
 Jeff Vaughn
Foley Mixer
 Brian Geer

Sound Re-recordists
 Ken Teaney
 William Fresh
 Tony Sereno
Sound Effects Editors
 Ricardo Broadus
 David Farmer
Foley Artists
 Greg Barbanell
 Vince Nicastro
Stunt Co-ordinators
 Tony Brubaker
 Jeff Haberstad
 Mike Russo

Cast
Wesley Snipes
 Roemello Skuggs
Michael Wright
 Raynathan Skuggs
Theresa Randle
 Melissa
Clarence Williams III
 A. R. Skuggs
Abe Vigoda
 Gus Molino
Larry Joshua
 Harry Molino
Ernie Hudson
 Lolly Jones
Leslie Uggams
 Doris Holly
Khandi Alexander
 Ella Skuggs
Devaughn Nixon
 Raynathan, age 11
Marquise Wilson
 Roemello, age 10
O. L. Duke
 Tutty
Anthony Thomas
 Worker
John Pittman
 Lucky
Steve J. Harris
 Ricky Goggles
Kimberly Russell
 Chantel

Abdul Mutakabbir
 Yusuf Ramadan
Karl Johnson
 Bouncers
Andre Lamal
 Martin David
Dulé Hill
 Roemello, age 17
Sam Gordon
 Raynathan, age 18
Raymond Serra
 Sal Marconi
Donald Adeosun Faison
 Kymie Daniels
Bryan Clark
 Dean
Lord Michael Banks
 Alex Brown
 Nigerians
Tony Adamo
 Joe Dallesandro
Nicki Corello
 Coco
Natalie Belcon
 Lynette
Brendan Jefferson
 Kid
Denetria Champ
 Diva
Phyromn Taylor
 Preacher
Sam Bottoms
 Oliver Thompson
Maria Kelley
 Coco's Girlfriend
Vondie Curtis-Hall
 Mark Doby

11,087 feet
123 minutes

Dolby stereo
In colour
 DeLuxe

● Sugar Hill, Harlem. Lying in bed, Roemello Skuggs remembers his childhood... His mother, a heroin addict, asks his older brother Raynathan to help her jack up. As they both watch, she spasms and dies... Now both brothers, grown up, are major drug dealers in their old neighbourhood, working for an ageing Italian gangster, Gus. At a club, Roemello meets a girl, Melissa, whom he wants to see again. Driving, he thinks back once more... He watches as his father, a drug dealer for the Mob, is shot, but not killed. Later he shoots the gunman. Then he goes to meet Gus, the gunman's relative, who ordered his father shot... Walking with Raynathan, Roemello meets a young boy from the suburbs, who shows off his gun; Roemello warns him off the streets. At a drug sales meeting with Gus, the brothers are told a new dealer, Lolly, needs a piece of their market. Afterwards, Roemello tells his brother he wants to quit the business. He tells his father, A.R., now an addict who he looks after, that he's quitting; A.R. tells him to take care of Lolly first. Later, Lolly burns his best friend Ricky to death. Melissa sees Ricky's body in the street just after Roemello, and runs away.

Roemello meets Gus, who tells him not to get worked up. Visiting Lolly, Roemello arranges a truce, then regains Melissa's trust. He makes Raynathan have dinner with their father for the first time in years, but Raynathan tells his father he should die. Then Raynathan kidnaps, shoots and tortures an Italian ally of Lolly's; coming across them, Roemello finishes the man off. Raynathan admits he has

started a gang war because he is scared of his brother leaving. As they walk, an attempted drive-by is interrupted by the suburban kid, who is shot dead. Melissa hears about it, and tells Raynathan she can no longer see him.

Roemello asks Raynathan to quit the streets, but Raynathan says it is too late. Meanwhile, Melissa is almost raped by a date. Roemello asks A.R. to quit Harlem, but he won't. Melissa and Roemello decide to leave for North Carolina that night. Roemello tells Gus, then his brother. Raynathan goes to their father and kills him with an overdose. Then he meets Gus, Gus's son and Lolly, and shoots them. Roemello and Melissa see A.R.'s body, then meet Raynathan in the street. Seeing Roemello is really leaving, Raynathan goes for his gun. In a struggle, Roemello is shot, then Raynathan shoots himself. Later, Roemello is seen in North Carolina in a wheelchair, happy, with Melissa and their son.

It is appropriate that the only sustained calm in this slice of ghetto life is the credits sequence, trad jazz playing over sepia photos of Harlem's 20s heyday. It is clearly where director Ichaso would be happiest. His film is a mess of styles because his idea of Harlem is a mess. Beginning in the 60s, shot in an unnatural MTV-style black-and-white, *Sugar Hill* switches to a present-day panorama, with a sun-streaked New York overlooked by the stylish 90s silhouette of gangster Roemello (Wesley Snipes). Around this, the camera hovers and twitches. But despite the presence of Bojan Bazelli, cinematographer of *King of New York* and *Deep Cover*, the two films which defined the cinematic ghetto of the 90s, Ichaso can't settle.

It's a fault compounded by the film's uneven tone. Making a first scene the screaming entreaty of a mother to her son to jack her up is arresting, but the scene is performed and scored so melodramatically that true sympathy is not reached. The bloody struggle between brothers near the end similarly seems strained. Even the music seems compromised. While Ichaso and his characters wallow in jazz, the hip-hop reluctantly allowed in beside it is treated with distrust. At every level, this is a film falling short of conviction.



Boyz 'n' the dead: Wesley Snipes

It's as if Ichaso would prefer modern Harlem not to exist. Unlike John Singleton, whose *Boyz n the Hood* entered ghetto life with sadness, then – like its character Furious – resolutely stayed there, Ichaso wants to get out. His viewpoint is that of Melissa's mother and of Martin Luther King, who stare down together at Melissa as she disowns Roemello. Like the jazz CDs hoarded by A.R., they suggest a 60s generation's dismay at a situation which has somehow escaped it. This sense of alienation – the exact opposite of what is intended – is confirmed by A.R. himself. A jazz musician sunk to dealer and addict, still fumbling at a piano at Roemello's insistence, he is a dribbling relic of something good. When he intones "I am Harlem!", shortly before a patricidal overdose, the washing of hands is deafening.

If *Sugar Hill* has a healing figure, it should be Roemello, who tells us that he knows what he is – one of Harlem's devastators. And yet, as he warns kids off the streets and spoon-feeds his father, we see only decency. Incapable of portraying the tortured complexity of a bad man turning good, Barry Michael Cooper's script simply ellides the bad. So, despite a performance by Snipes of pressurised grace, Roemello is left as a saint – a man so disconnected from the ghetto pain he in fact helped cause that his salvation is just a plane ride away.

Amidst such sappiness, Ichaso shows evidence of talent. *Sugar Hill* shares the trend – which began with *Boyz* – away from generic thrillers towards more encompassing tales of crime; and moments like Raynathan's repulsion at his father's table ring quietly true. By contrast, the giggling excitement of the hardcore thrillers which the film nods at too briefly is seized on with relief, momentarily freeing Ichaso from his story's weight. A drive-by interrupted by a furiously pedalling kid on a bike, pistol raised like a cowboy, even welds thrills and tragedy with broad strokes otherwise absent. But finally the film lacks the stomach to see things through. "No son, this will not happen again," Roemello soothes from his Carolina bolthole. Of course it will. *Sugar Hill* doesn't solve the crime, it just leaves the scene.

Nick Hasted

Tallinn pimeduses (Darkness in Tallinn)

Finland/USA/Sweden/Estonia 1993

Director: Ilkka Järvelä

Certificate

Not yet issued

Distributor

Metro

Production Company

FilmZolfo

In association with

Upstream Pictures

(New York)/FilmLance

International

(Stockholm)/Film

Teknik (Solna)/EXITfilm

(Tallinn)

With financial

assistance from

Suomen

Elokuvastäätö/Maria-

nne Möller Nordisk

Film-&TV-Fond/Bengt

Forslund

Executive Producer

Ilkka Järvelä

Producer

Lasse Saarinen

Co-producer

Börje Hansson

Line Producer

Heikki Takkinen

Associate Producer

Peeter Uurla

Unit Manager

Tõnis Sahkai

2nd Unit Director

Toomas Hussar

Assistant Directors

Piret Tõbb

Artur Talvik

Reele Rand

Screenplay

Paul Kolsby

Based on an idea

by Ilkka Järvelä and

Paul Kolsby

Director of Photography

Rein Kotov

2nd Unit Photography

Urmas Sepp

Graphics

Anu Pitkanen

Editor

Christopher Tellefsen

Production Designer

Toomas Hõrak

Special Effects

Heikki Takkinen

Explosion:

Armin Altorf

Heikki Takkinen

Klaus Hedström

Marti Veri

Fire:

Viktor Abroi

Costume Design

Mare Raidma

Make-up

Ly Kärrer

Titles

Anu Pitkanen

Music/Arrangements/

Producer

Mader

Music Editor

Christopher Tellefsen

Songs/Music Extract

"Mu isamaa on minu

arm" by Johan

Voldemar Jannsen,

Fredrik Pacius,

performed by (1)

Monika Mäger, (2)

Tallinn Orchestra; "Lili

Marlene" performed by

Marlene Dietrich;

"Poljushko pole" by

L. Knipper, V. Gusev,

performed by The Red

Army Orchestra and

Choir; "Eesti peab

saama vabaks" by

Ottneil Jürissaar,

performed by Ivo

Linna; "Kuradi poika"

(traditional),

performed by Leigarid;

"Valle rille raa

("We shall overcome"),

(traditional), Estonian

lyrics by Piret Tõbb,

performed by

Leigarid, Mihkel

Smeljanski, Jüri

Vlassov; "Adagio" by

Tomaso Albinoni

Sound

J. Sergio Vantänen

Sound Editors

J. Sergio Vantänen

Olli Parmanen

Kyösti Vantanen

Olli Huhtanen

Dialogue:

Matti Kuortti

Sound Re-recorder

Mel Kutbay

Sound Effects

Kimmo Karjunen

Peter Nordström

Advisers

Toomas Koovit

Ulvi Kreitsmann

Tiit Kõiv

Allan Saar

Mati Linnamäe

Ulari Kell

Juri Piltar

Cast

Ivo Ukkivi

Toivo

Milena Gulbe

Maria

Monika Mäger

Terje

Enn Klooren

Mihhail "Misha"

Väinö Laes

Andres

Peeter Oja

Dmitri, Mihhail's Son

Juri Järvet

Anton

Villem Indrikson

Officer Kallas

Andres Raag

Kallas' Colleague

Gerardo Contreras

Doctor

Martin Tulmin

Baby

Kadri Kilvet

Salme Poopuu

Ulvi Kreitsmann

Nurses

Kristel Kärrer

Pregnant Woman

Aleksander Kortava

Raivo Tamm

Men

Tõnu Kark

Koni "Stub"

Stepan Maurits

Koni's Colleague

Ain Lutsepp

Ernst, Tobacco Factory

Worker

Vladimir Laptev

Priest

Vladimir Laptev Jr

Priest's Son

Anna-Liisa Lehtmet

Priest's Daughter

Saima Reek

Grocery Shop Owner

Kristel Leesmond

Shop Assistant

Raivo Tamm

Man

Dajan Ahmetov

Gangster

Ants Vain

Toivo's Superior

Aarne Leet

Aarne, Guard

Leida Paju

Cleaner

Paul Laasik

Edgar Luks

Aado Hermelin

Shot Policeman

Jaana Tatte

Peeter, Anton's

son-in-law

Carmen Tabor

Diana

Mardo Tamm

Peeter and Diana's

Child

Enn Nõmmik

Gold Car Driver

Jüri Vlassov

Mihkel Smeljanski

Tall Dancers

Elna Aasa

Fiddler

Leigarid

Folk Dance Band

Tallinn

Orchestra

Tarmo Kruusimäe

Kristjan Müller

Hooligans in Grocery

Shop

Kerstin Raidma

Hooligan in Wine Shop

Igor Põldma

Mihhail's Bodyguard

Tooms Tatrik

Anton's Bodyguard

Tarmo Mannard

Drunken Russian

Soldier

Enn Pauk

Man on Tram

Dieg Mihhailov

Crane Operator

Toomas Tamm

Taxi Driver

Toomas Hussar

Driver

Mati Talvik

Bank President

Rein Lind

Politician on TV

Aare Kasemaa

Politician at Eesti Bank

Külli Palmsaar

TV Director

Heino Lähtheim

Eero Uustalu

Erik Lill

Indrek Dolup

Urmas Turk

Gangsters

Artur Talvik

Armin Altorf

Mati Jaeski

Toomas Zahharov

Ullar Vomm

Vello Roovere

Gangsters at

Electricity Station

8,910 feet

99 minutes

Dolby stereo

Black and white/

Part in colour

Estonian dialogue

Subtitles

Finnish title:

Tallinnan pimeys

1991. After finally regaining its independence, Estonia awaits the return of \$970 million in gold, secreted in a Paris bank during the half century of Soviet rule. The people are assured that prosperity lies ahead. But Mihhail, the new boss



Northern lights: Milena Gulbe, Ivo Uukkivi

◀ in the port Anton shoots Mihhail. At the hospital, Toivo finds his son crying and his wife dead, but his tears fall on her face and she opens her eye.

Darkness and light are at the heart of Ilkka Järvilä's second feature – physically so, as the monochrome photography of the first half of the film gives way first to an extended sequence of blackness, and then to colour as light is returned to Tallinn. The moral implications of these chromatics are easy to fathom. In preparing for the heist the gang buy up all possible sources of light, including even the church candles. When an almost apocalyptic darkness falls upon the city, young Estonians take to looting. *Darkness in Tallinn* is a crime movie that makes effective use of its setting, though we see little of the ancient capital's picturesque beauty the Estonian folk singers in the cobbled streets are perplexed and marginal figures here, irrelevant to the drama unfolding around them.

The film's sense of place emerges rather through its acute and pervasive sense that the new country is undergoing a moral challenge, a challenge delineated not only on the grand scale of politics and history – the credits unfold against newsreels of Estonia's recent past, the national anthem greets the arrival of the bullion – but more pressingly in the minor decisions of individual lives, where no small sin passes unnoticed. Almost the first action of brutal Dmitri is to crush a young girl's treasured drink can, and it is a sure path from there to perdition. The equally callous Stub smashes the gold watch a young man has inherited from his grandfather. His fate will be to be fried beneath an upturned pot of molten gold. Another gang member, Andres, asks whether a killer can enter the kingdom of heaven.

But *Darkness in Tallinn* is not weighed down by its serious concerns, and it works extremely effectively as a compelling and densely plotted heist movie, with the three stories, the delivery of the gold, the delivery of the child and the extinguishing of the

light satisfyingly intercut. Järvilä has a nice eye for incidental detail – young people on stilts roam the streets ordering people to "Smile!", a radio offers "more hits, less talk from FM-Estonia" – and the film is sometimes darkly humorous in a way reminiscent of its director's older compatriot, Aki Kaurismäki.

Above all, though, like Kaurismäki's *Ariel* and like Järvilä's much praised debut *Homebound*, *Darkness in Tallinn* looks at its characters through the prism of their (secure, corrupted, aspired to) family relationships. The gang's new "godfather", Mihhail is, in his own words, "merciless" when the old boss, Anton, wants him to spare his son-in-law, Peeter. Mihhail himself is tempted into recklessness by the shock of the retributive death of his own son, Dmitri. When Anton's daughter Diana abuses and abandons him after he has failed to prevent her husband's death, he (Juri Järvet, who played Snaut in Tarkovsky's *Solaris* and another patriarch brought to nemesis, Kozintsev's *Lear*) shoots Mihhail dead. (In this film the worst of the criminals have Russian names; the innocent, and those open to the call to repent, are Estonians.) Diana, Peeter and their child are a (Russian-Estonian) family who even in death can resist the force of evil – both son-in-law and daughter cast Anton, the "demon-tempter" to the ground – and in this they offer an example to the film's wavering central family, Toivo, Maria and their infant son.

If Maria's miraculous "resurrection" at the end of the film takes it beyond the verisimilitude it has hitherto espoused, it echoes an earlier scene at the electricity plant when Toivo himself had seemed to die of an electric shock, and the threatened death of their son in his incubator. It is also consistent with the film's allegorical agenda (in which they figure as an earthly, sinful "holy family" for Estonia), with its (optimistic) insistence that love and faith (a voice had told Toivo that both he and his wife would see this baby) can redeem, and conquer the forces of darkness.

Julian Graffy

Threesome

USA 1994

Director: Andrew Fleming

Certificate

18

Distributor

Columbia TriStar

Production Company

Motion Picture Corporation of America
For TriStar Pictures

Executive Producer

Cary Woods

Producers

Brad Kreyov
Steve Stabler

Co-producer

Brad Jenkel

Line Producer

Tracie Graham Rice

Associate Producer

David Stein

Production Coordinators

Dawn Thomas

Office:

Karen F. McCarthy

Unit Production Manager

Tracie Graham Rice

Location Managers

Jack Hardwicke

Additional:

Marvin J. Bernstein

Post-production Supervisor

George Gale

Assistant Directors

Jack Breschard

Richard J. Levin

Jack Steven Kreyov

Robin Winters

Additional:

Matt Hinkley

Phil Robinson

Robert Neft

Casting

Ed Mitchell

Robyn Ray

Screenplay

Andrew Fleming

Script Supervisors

Martin Kitrosser

Kate Morrison

Director of Photography

Andrew Gruszynski

Additional Photography

Jacek Laskus

Steadicam Operator

Bruce A. Greene

Editor

William C. Carruth

Production Designer

Ivo Cristante

Art Directors

Ken Larson

Set Decorators

Tim Colohan

Additional:

William H. Staples

Set Dresser

Eric London

Storyboard Artist

Raymond Consign

Costume Design

Deborah Everton

Wardrobe Supervisor

Sonya Ooten

Key Make-up

Patty York

Additional:

Cheryl Voss

Key Hairstylist

Clare M. Corsick

Titles/Opticals

Cinema Research Corporation

Music

Thomas Newman

Executive Music Producer

Ralph Sall

Orchestrations

Thomas Pasatieri

Music Editor

Bill Bernstein

Music Consultant

Jeffrey Pollack

Songs/Music Extracts

"New Star" by Roland

Orzabal, Alan Griffiths,

performed by Tears For

Fears; "Boom Shak-A-

Lak" by and performed

by Apache Indian;

"He's My Best Friend"

by Andy Summer,

Roger Manning,

performed by Jellyfish;

"Transpiritual Stomp"

by and performed by

The Fireman; "Make

Me Smile" by Steve

Harley, performed by

Duran Duran;

"Dancing Barefoot"

by Patti Smith, Ivan

Kral, performed by U2;

"Is Your Love Strong

Enough" by and

performed by Bryan

Ferry; "What Does

Sex Mean to Me"

by Larry Bangor,

performed by Human

Sexual Response;

"Like a Virgin" by

Tom Kelly, Billy

Steinberg, performed

by Teenage Fanclub;

"That Was the Day"

by Matthew Johnson,

performed by The The;

"I'll Take You There"

by Alvertis Isbell,

performed by General

Public; "Visions of You"

by Jah Wobble, Justin

Adams, John Reynolds,

performed by Jah

Wobble; "Parlez-moi

d'amour" by Jean

Lenoir; "Bizarre Love

Triangle" by Stephen

Morris, Peter Hook,

Bernard Sumner,

Gillian Gilbert,

performed by New

Order; "Buttercup"

by Stone Gossard,

Shawn Smith, Jeremy

Toback, Regan Hagar,

performed by Brad;

"On the Wheel" by

Dean Garcia, Toni

Halliday, performed

by Curve; "99 Miles

Away" by Scott

O'Gorman, Chris

O'Gorman, Brian

Johnson, Scott

Puckett, performed

by Stephen Baldwin

Supervising Sound Editor

William Carruth

Foley Supervisor

Bill Bell

Sound Recordist

Frank Fleming

Sound Mixers

Giovanni Di Simone

Additional:

Mark Weingarten

Music:

Dennis Sands

Foley Mixer

Ron Bedrosian

Sound Re-recording Mixers

Robert W. Glass Jr

Richard D. Rogers

Sound Effects Editor

David Eichhorn

Foley Artists

Jill Schachne

Tim Chilton

Stunt Co-ordinator

B.J. Davis

Cast

Lara Flynn Boyle

Alex

Stephen Baldwin

Stuart

Josh Charles

Eddy

Alexis Arquette

Dick

Martha Gehman

Renay

Mark Arnold

Larry

Michele Matheson

Kristen

Joanne Baron

Curt Woman

Jennifer Lawler

Neighbour

Jack Breschard

Priest

Jillian Johns

Amy Ferioli

Partygoers

Jason Workman

Medical Student

Katherine Kousi

Laundry Girl

Kathleen Beaton

Girl at Registration

Anna Maria O'Donnell

Woman at Library

8,378 feet

93 minutes

Dolby stereo

In colour

At the start of the college year two students – Eddy and Stuart – find themselves reluctantly sharing a dorm. Stuart hangs soft porn posters on his walls while Eddy puts up Munch's *The Scream*; Eddy studies while Stuart pulls the girls. Their uneasy equilibrium is disrupted by the arrival of Alex, a woman who has mistakenly been designated a bed in their male dorm. Before long Alex attempts to seduce Eddy while Stuart makes advances to Alex. Alex cannot understand why Eddy is not interested in her; he explains that he is a "sexually ambivalent" virgin and fancies Stuart.

Rumours start to fly about the threesome, who become even closer sexually and socially, gradually losing interest in other people. Alex continues to pursue Eddy, while Eddy chases Stuart and Stuart goes after Alex – meanwhile both men sleep independently with Alex. Their final sexual encounter involves all three.

The bubble bursts when Alex wrongly suspects that she's pregnant. The year ends and the three go their separate ways. Despite meeting up at graduation and doing lunch roughly once a year, they virtually lose touch. Stuart settles down in a monogamous heterosexual relationship, Alex remains single and Eddy refers obliquely in voice-over to a "boyfriend".

From Eddy's opening voice-over offering an expansive, pedantic account of the Latin roots of the word "deviant" there's the unmistakable odour of loucheness mingled with pseudo-intellectuality hanging over *Threesome*, as if the film were trying to be risqué and earnest at the same time. Hence, perhaps, the enigmatic references by Eddy to his French cinema course, a certain tendency in French cinema having been to make art house films out of the parochial and insignificant world of human emotions. Late in the film Eddy makes just such an oblique allusion to that classic threesome movie, *Jules et Jim*. This is a mistake, because in comparison *Threesome* palls, replacing Truffaut's tongue-in-cheek detachment with coyness.

Threesome is in too many ways an extended game of dare – a lesson in how to avoid being boring by carving out a place in the memories of boring contemporaries. Alex (that prevalent college-movie anomaly, the haute cou-

tured student) breaks free of her chains of dullness after an initial phase which involves clutching a teddy and acting in a lesbian version of *Oedipus Rex*. Stuart on the other hand, is the prime instigator of the film's naughtiness. He licks the thighs of the models in his soft porn poster, masks his face with a pair of Alex's panties and advises the reluctant Eddy to "at least get a blow job" out of Alex's infatuation with him. Stephen Baldwin's sniggering, grinning, oafish Stuart is Butt-Head on steroids. To be a cool dude entails frequent sex, and a necessary achievement is having a threesome. So these three are the coolest on the block.

Or rather they would be if they were attractive and their *ménage à trois* credible. Instead of unleashing a truly daring fantasy, *Threesome*, simply a traditional coming-of-age movie with twist, sticks to its coy, preppy pen, promising but never delivering the much-vaunted "deviancy". There are scenes which are plain embarrassing, like Alex's writhing on the library table as Eddy reads Hawthorne to her (a nod in the direction of *A Fish Called Wanda*), or Eddy's subsequent attempt at seducing the defiantly heterosexual Stuart. The sincerely dull Eddy is the linchpin here, the 'gay' who runs a mile when the one other gay character, Dick, makes advances to him.

Director Andrew Fleming presents a limited picture of student life (sex and pizza) and an even narrower vision of sexuality. There's none of the power play found in the triangle operating in *Cabaret*, for instance, where each party is made vulnerable by their unconventional situation. In *Threesome* the danger is imagined or promised, as when Dick and his sidekick, spying through binoculars, assume that Eddy and Stuart are having sex when Eddy is merely helping a drunk Stuart to his feet. Similarly the threesome scenes are titillating but sanitised, as the physical object of desire for both men remains Alex, despite the final bed scene during which Stuart allows Eddy to rest a hand on his buttock. Having already been told in Eddy's voice-over that his ideal partner would be a combination of his two room-mates, it is hardly surprising that he finally decides to sleep with Alex, and it's difficult to entirely dispel the notion that she could guide him back to heterosexuality.

The message is deeply reactionary: threesomes are dandy as long as the piggy in the middle is female. Because this is ultimately as outrageous as *Threesome* gets, the film sidesteps any more complex or problematic questions about desire and sexuality, opting instead to ease its characters into monogamy. For such a would-be racy film, *Threesome* offers an oppressive and unflinching idea of "normality", its weirdest moment being, absurdly enough, when both Eddy and Stuart jump naked into the lake with only their shoes and socks on. Is this the 90s version of keeping one foot on the ground during a bed scene?

Stella Bruzzi

Vale Abraão (Abraham Valley)

Portugal/France/Switzerland 1993

Director: Manoel de Oliveira

Certificate

PG

Distributor

Artificial Eye

Production Companies

Madragoa Films
(Portugal)
Gemini Films (France)
Light Night
(Switzerland)
In association with
Canal +
Television Suisse
Romande

Producer

Paulo Branco

Production Managers

Alexandre Barradas

Patricia Plattner

Assistant Directors

José Maria Vaz da Silva
António Sequeira Lopes

Casting

Agnès Fierobe

Screenplay

Manoel de Oliveira
Based on the book by
Augustina Bessa-Luis,
loosely based on the
novel *Madame Bovary* by
Gustave Flaubert

Dialogue

Manoel de Oliveira

Sermon

Padre João Marques

Script Supervisor

Júlia Buisel

Director of Photography

Mário Barroso

Editors

Manoel de Oliveira

Valérie Loiseleux

Set Design

Maria José Branco

Costume Design

Isabel Branco

Make-up

Michelle Bernet

Song/Music Extracts

"Tenderly" by Coleman
Hawkins, performed by
Don Byas; "Clair de
lune" by (1) Ludwig van
Beethoven, (2) Gabriel
Fauré, (3) Claude
Debussy, (4) Robert
Schumann, (5) Frédéric
Chopin, performed by
Nuno V. de Almeida

Sound

Henri Maikoff

Sound Editors

Thierry Delor

Hans Künzi

Sound Mixer

Christophe Winding

Dubbing

Kilkoine

Sound Effects

Marie Jeanne

Wyckmans

Cast

Mário Barroso

Narrator

Leonor Silveira

Ema

Cecile Sanz de Alba

Young Ema

Luis Miguel Cintra

Carlos Paiva

Rui de Carvalho

Paulino Cardeano

Luis Lima Barreto

Pedro Lumiares

Micheline Larpin

Simona

Diogo Dória

Fernando Osório

José Pinto

Caires

Filipe Cochofel

Fortunato

João Perry

Padre Dossém

Glória de Matos

Maria do Loreto

António Reis

Semblano

Isabel Ruth

Ritinha

Laura Soveral

Tia Augusta

Monique Dodd

Chêlinha

Juliana Samarine

Nelson's Wife

Miguel Guilherme

Motorcyclist

Nuno Vieira de Almeida

Nelson

Isabel de Castro

Jlia Buisel

Melo Sisters

Dina Treno

Branca

Dallia Carmo e Sousa

Marina

Paula Seabra

Alice

Vanda Fernandes

Lolota as a Young Child

Sofia Alves

Lolota as a Little Girl

Leonor Viseu

Luisona as a Young

Child

Beatriz Batarda

Luisona as a Little Girl

António Wagner

Baltazar

Argentina Rocha

Carlos' First Wife

Josefina Húngaro

Nelson's Mother

Fernando Bento

Dr Carmesim

Manuel Enes

Homero

Ana Queirós

Mercedes Brawand

Paiva Sisters

David Cardoso

Gardener

Vaz Mendes

Rui Oliveira

Teenage Boys

Joaquim Nogueira

Narciso

Lurdes Rocha

Dressmaker

Marques de Aredo

Padre Pires

Padres

Beatriz Batarda

Young Ema's Voice

Teresa Madruga

Simona's Voice

Eurice de Almeida

Chêlinha's Voice

Alina Candeias

2nd Paiva Sister's Voice

17,008 feet

189 minutes

Dolby stereo

In colour

Subtitles

Having lost her mother at the age of six, Ema, lame in one leg, has been raised in an atmosphere of poetic refinement by her father Paulino Cardeano. She has matured into a sensual young woman with a 'vulgar' taste for romantic fiction (such as *Madame Bovary*) criticised by her aunt Augusta. On meeting her husband-to-be Dr Carlos de Paiva, she judges him a fool. Many men are attracted by Ema's beauty and charm: they include Nelson, who has an affair with her maid Branca to get near her, but ends up marrying an heiress.

Carlos revisits the Cardeano house for Augusta's wake, and reveals that his wife has also died. Soon after, Ema and Carlos marry and Ema moves to his home in Romesal, accompanied by her mute washerwoman Ritinha. Life is dull; Ema finds no rapport with Carlos' two older sisters, but meets more interesting people at a ball in the house of Pedro Lumiares, including the dashing Fernando Osório and the philanderer Narciso Semblano. At a series of receptions and dinner parties, some hosted by the worldly Maria do Loreto, she meets the rest of the district's social circle. Carlos, aware that he cannot satisfy Ema's romantic longings, proposes that she have an affair with Pedro – a development viewed with cynical detachment by Pedro's wife Simona.

By the time that Ema takes Osório as her lover, more as a provocation than as an act of desire, she has two daughters by Carlos. At Osório's lakeside villa in Vesuvio, she meets musicians, artists and freethinkers. Carlos turns to Maria do Loreto for platonic company; enraged by his apparent indifference, Ema returns to Vesuvio alone and flirts with young estate worker Fortunato, deliberately provoking the jealousy of the butler Caires. Carlos turns to Ema's father for advice on saving the marriage, but is met with scorn.

Disillusioned with her life and frustrated by the men around her, Ema takes leave of Ritinha and makes a final visit to Vesuvio. There she dresses in a party frock and flowers and makes her way through the orange grove to the jetty by the lake, where she (deliberately?) steps on a rotten board and drowns. Not long after, Carlos is found dead of an apparent heart attack.

Manoel de Oliveira is a unique case in world cinema: an auteur-director active since the late 1920s (he was one of the pioneers of Portuguese cinema) whose work remained virtually unnoticed by critics and audiences outside Portugal until the mid-1970s. His first short film *Douro, Faina Fluvial* (1931) was screened at the Film Society in London in 1935, and some of his later feature films have appeared at the British festivals, but none of his work has been distributed here until now. *Abraham Valley* stands well enough by itself, but will mean most to NFT-goers who can relate it to his tetralogy on 'frustrated love': *O Passado e o Presente* (1972), *Benilde ou a Virgem Mae* (1975), *Amor de Perdição* (1978) and *Francisca* (1981).

Like *Francisca*, this is based on a novel by Agustina Bessa-Luis; but this novel was framed as an ironic commentary on *Madame Bovary*, which makes the film an adaptation of Flaubert at two removes. The echoes of *Bovary*, however, are eclipsed by Oliveira's vision of Ema as a hapless victim of her own lyrical desires. The film charts with minute precision the way she constructs the circumstances in which she can and must die: Ema fully grasps the material and social realities she lives with, but wilfully seeks to transcend them by imposing her sense of 'poetry' on them – and it is the clash between these irreconcilable opposites that makes her death inevitable. None of the men in her life comes close to living up to her lyrical ideals and none understands her emotional distance from them as anything but a game of the heart. She responds by translating her real disappointment into a poetic anguish, and by creating her own romantic-fatalistic *mise en scène* (lilting through an orange grove straight out of an Andrew Marvell poem, in her party frock) for a death scene that aims to transcend the realities of a gammy leg and a rotten plank in a jetty. The notion of a protagonist who tries to suspend the normal rules of society and replace them with a fantasy of his or her own devising is a constant in Oliveira's cinema, and most Oliveira protagonists end up dead or mad.

Another constant in Oliveira's cinema is the insistence on literary or theatrical sources. A committed modernist, the veteran director insists on identifying dramatic content as something to be quoted or acted out, to eliminate the risk of transparency. Here, he allows his cast to give more or less naturalistic performances but uses formalised and sometimes stylised compositions to literally put a frame around them, and undercuts the seeming naturalness by using the detached and ironic voice of a male narrator (presumably quoting directly from Bessa Luis' novel) to comment on their thoughts and behaviour throughout. The result is unfailingly witty, sharp and provocative: it offers a perspective that is solely and specifically cinematic on matters social, emotional, psychological and aesthetic.

But the result is also an 'art film' that fits rather too neatly into a genre that regrettably has to be called 'post-modern literary adaptation'. Fassbinder set most of the ground rules for this genre with *Effi Briest*, and little has changed since: witness *The Age of Innocence* and Stanley Kwan's forthcoming *Red Rose, White Rose*, both of which use novelistic voice-over narration to establish an ironic distance from formalised accounts of period manners and morals. But Oliveira's magisterial artistry is here deployed in the service of a project that seems too etiolated, too remote from all late twentieth-century terms of reference to have any real purchase on the lives or imaginations of any conceivable audience. Maybe this is what they meant by 'salon art'.

Tony Rayns

Wrestling Ernest Hemingway

USA 1994

Director: Randa Haines

Certificate
12

Distributor
Warner Bros.

Production Company
Warner Bros.

Producers
Todd Black
Joe Wizan

Co-producer
Jim Van Wyck

Associate Producer
Danna Blesser

Unit Production Manager
Joseph P. Kane

Location Manager
Mary Morgan

Assistant Directors
Jim Van Wyck
Princess Stabile
Alisa Statman

Casting
Lora Kennedy

Associate:
Michael Bircumshaw

Principal/Extra Florida:
Ellen Jacoby

Screenplay
Steve Conrad

Script Supervisor
Annette Hayward-Carter

Director of Photography
Lajos Koltai

Camera Operator
Michael St. Hilaire

Visual Effects Supervisors
Michael J. McAllister
Kimberly Nelson

Editor
Paul Hirsch

Production Designer
Waldemar Kalinowski

Art Director
Alan E. Muraoka

Set Design
Carlos Arditti

Set Decorator
Florence Fellman

Costume Design
Joe I. Tompkins

Costume Supervisor
Margo Baxley

Make-up Artist
Manlio Rocchetti

Hairstylist
Roy Bryson

Title Design
Nina Saxon Film Design

Titles/Opticals
Pacific Title

Music
Michael Convertino

Music Conductor
Artie Kane

Orchestrations
John Neufeld

Music Editor
Tom Carlson

Songs
"Lagrimas Negras"
by Miguel Matamoros,
performed by (1)
Barbarito Diez,
(2) Trio Matamoros,
(3) Jerry Brock, Ray
Gregory, Bob Pancoast,
Norman Yablon,
Edward Carhart;
"Top Hat, White Tie
and Tails" by Irving
Berlin, performed by
Fred Astaire; "Lisbon
Antigua" by Raul
Portela, José Galhardo,
Amado do Vale,
performed by Nelson
Riddle and His
Orchestra; "La Mujer
de Antonio" by Miguel
Matamoros, performed
by Trio Matamoros,
Guaracheros de
Oriente; "Saoco"

by Rosendo Ruiz
Quevedo, performed
by Caridad Hierrezuelo
y Conjunto Caney;
"As Long As We're
Together" by Bob
Khazouri, Rick
Wheeler, Barry
Goldstein, performed
by Lee Ann Napolitano,
Orlando Pagan; "Nena"
by Patricio Ballagas,
"Viente años" by Maria
Teresa Vera, performed
by Maria Teresa Vera;
"I Love Paris" by Cole
Porter, performed by
Bob Edwards, Vince
Marlo Balsamello,
George DuVal, Herb
Nach, Eleonora
Vescera; "Some
Enchanted Evening"
by Richard Rodgers,
Oscar Hammerstein II;
"A Summer Place" by
Max Steiner; "Chess
Anyone" by Michael
Legrand

Choreography
Daryl Matthews

Supervising Sound Editors
Larry Kemp
Lon E. Bender

Sound Editors
Richard Dwan Jnr
Dan M. Rich
Christopher Assells
Chris Hogan
Per Hallberg
Randy Kelley
Scott Gershin

ADR Supervisor
Gregg Baxter

ADR Editor
Jeff Watts

Production Sound Mixer
Michael R. Tromer

ADR Mixer
Thomas J. O'Connell

Foley Mixers
Mary Jo Lang
Eric Gotthelf

Music Mixer
Shawn Murphy

Sound Re-recorders
Donald O. Mitchell
Elliot Tyson
Dave Campbell
Robert J. Litt

Foley Artists
John B. Roesch
Kevin Bartnoff
Alicia Stevenson
Ellen Heuer

Cast
Robert Duvall
Walt
Richard Harris
Frank
Shirley MacLaine
Helen
Sandra Bullock
Elaine
Nicole Mercurio
Bernice
Marty Belafsky
Ned Ryan
Harold Bergman
Sleeper
Piper Laurie
Georgia
Ed Amatrudo
Henry's Dad
Jag Davies
Henry
Rudolph X. Herrera
Umpire
Persephone Fender
Woman in Stands
Stephen G. Anthony
Leo Peetes
Greg Paul Meyers
Sid Showenstein

Aquilla Owens
Danika Daly
Girls in Park
Doris Carey
Mother in Park
Jody Wilson
Nurse
Anthony Rene Jones
Bus Driver
Richard Jansen
Third Base Man
William Marquez
Carl Burney
Chick Bernhardt
Ron Russell
Stunt Drivers

Hise Earl
Cinema Cashier
Kent Ehrhardt
Weatherman
Eleonora L. Vescera
Singing Woman
Daryl Matthews
Officer Mickey

11,032 feet
123 minutes

Dolby stereo
In colour
Technicolor

South Florida. Dapper ex-barber Walter, an expatriate Cuban, lives alone, eating the same bacon sandwich breakfast at the local café – where he conducts a half-flirtatious relationship with waitress Elaine. Frank, a drink-sodden former sea captain of Irish extraction, also lives by himself; abandoned by his son in a run-down apartment block tended by world-weary widow Helen, he still has romantic designs on senior citizen Georgia. The two men could hardly be more different: Walt is circumspect, discreet and shy with women; gregarious Frank loudly boasts of his four wives and many conquests. A chance meeting in the park, however, sparks off an unlikely friendship.

Frank is initially disdainful of Walt's entrenched routine and takes him on a tandem ride to view the Fourth of July fireworks display. On their return, Walt gives Frank a neat haircut, while the latter takes his new-found pal on a fishing trip. Both men gain a new purpose, yet both are to meet disappointment: Walt is shocked to hear that Elaine is getting married; while for Frank, Georgia's latest rejection carries an air of finality. Frank tries to help Walt bid Elaine farewell by buying her a bottle of vodka, a gift that sparks a bitter argument between the men.

Over the next few days, Walt fails to appear, leaving Frank to feel guilty when Walt's favoured Little League baseball team wins a game and Walt isn't there to see it. Frank seeks solace in the arms of Helen, who keeps intimacy largely at bay. Soon though, the two men are reconciled and Walt visits Elaine at home to say goodbye. Later, he invites Frank to a dance, but when he arrives at his pal's apartment, Frank has died peacefully. Walt plucks up the courage to go to the dance, riding Frank's tandem to his destination.

Randa Haines' new film bears all the obvious marks of the screenwriter's contrivance, yet still carries an emotional clout, offering readily grasped performing opportunities to a cast who represent between them almost an entire history of post-50s screen acting. A first-time effort from young college graduate Steve Conrad, the screenplay unfolds with methodical predictability: an accretion of contrasting character and lifestyle details delineates the differences between the two men, but in playing reserved fantasist Walt against vainglorious old sod Frank, those very differences highlight the experience they share. In their sep-

arate ways – Frank because he's withdrawn into daydreams and sustaining routine, Walt because his own exuberant self-mythologising is a pain in the ass to everyone around him – the pair's rigid self-definition inhibits their ability to communicate with others. (The title is derived from Frank's oft-repeated anecdote of how he once went hand to hand with the heavyweight of American literature). Isolated, Walt and Frank look increasingly lost – we first see Walt dancing by himself in his apartment, Frank, buck naked, practising press-ups in his room. Yet together they're on complementary learning curves. From such a basic blueprint many a buddy picture has been patterned, and this one would be little dissimilar, if not for the conviction and practised screen craft which Robert Duvall and Richard Harris bring to their roles, and the confidence shown by director Haines in simply trusting them to get on with it.

In her previous features *Children of a Lesser God* and *The Doctor*, Haines has been adept at using institutional back-grounds (a special needs school, a busy hospital) as a grounding for her characters' individual feelings, although in both cases, credible observation was rather undercut by plot-driven melodramatics. Here, on the other hand, the narrative is such a generic standby it's almost a given, so Haines can devote more space to the characters simply being themselves. Commendably, it's one of the least pacy major studio pictures to be seen in a while, and Haines deserves much credit for the maturity with which she keeps camera stylistics to a minimum, establishes a believable environment and holds true to a deliberate rhythmic gait throughout the two-hour-plus running time. The result pays dividends in its touching exploration of such un-Hollywood areas as loneliness and self-delusion, though the too-regimented structure in the end stands between the film and genuine stature.

Still, Haines has cajoled a number of solid performances from her distinguished cast. MacLaine, a star for four decades, now has so little to prove that she's lost the need to hyper-emote on screen and simply lets her sad eyes and age-worn features do the talking – her bitter yet vulnerable widow, the caretaker of Frank's apartment block, is an effective portrait on a minor scale. Harris, on the other hand, simply lets rip in a part that demands it. His is the least disciplined, perhaps the most enjoyable turn in the film, almost a caricature of his familiar wild Irishman schtick but insightful in the genuine pain it suggests beneath the blarney. In this company, Duvall, an associate of the movie brat generation, might perhaps seem too modern a performer, and here we're far from his sardonic Kilgore in *Apocalypse Now*. Yet the fastidiousness with which he builds Walt's assemblage of tics and rituals into a humane essay in deep repression, though untypical, stands beside the best work he's done.

Trevor Johnston

TV FILMS

Criminal

United Kingdom 1994

Director: Corin Campbell-Hill

Distributor
BBC TV

Production Company
BBC

For Screen Two
George Faber

Executive Producer
Hilary Salmon

Associate Producer
Howard Kingston

Production Executive
Ann Faggetter

Location Managers
Jonathan Crofts
Tim Bradley

Telecine Post-production
Dave Hawley

Assistant Directors
Paul Judges
Amanda Neal
Jeanie Hamilton

Casting
Adults:
Nic Horsey

Screenplay
Vincent O'Connell

Script Supervisor
Thelma Helsby

Script Editor
Anna Price

Director of Photography
David Odd

Steadicam Operator
John Ward

Video Effects
Dave Jervis

Visual Effects Designer
Stuart Brisdon

Graphic Designer
Rosemary Turner

Editor
Mark Day

Designer
Francesca Boyd

Costume Design
Hazel Pethig

Make-up Designer
Elaine Smith

Music
Orlando Gough

Dubbing Editors
Jane Greenwood
Adrian Rhodes

Film Recordist
Dick Manton

Dubbing Mixer
Aad Wirtz

Stunt Co-ordinator
Gareth Milne

Cast
Paul Popplewell
Simon Willerton
Leanne Whalley
Annie
Cheryl Godber
Marie
Nicky Evans
Toddy
Jensen Marriott
Gaz

David Ayres
Dunk
David Bradley
Headmaster
Peter Glancy
Dave
Malcolm Tomlinson
Geoff
Andrew Barrow
Tony
David Hobbs
Christopher Wilkinson
School Inspectors
Richard Mayes
Tom
Lynda Rooke
Stacy
June Watson
Brenda
Irene Skillington
Simon's Mother
Claude Close
YTS Officer
John Gully
DC Harris
Ray Ashcroft
Jim Whelan
Policemen
Frances Cox
Elderly Woman
Jim Millea
Man in Hotel
Elaine Heywood
Mrs Virishi
John Graham Davies
Prosecutor
Stuart Richman
Magistrate
Eamonn Riley
Solicitor
Ian Mercer
Probation Officer
Johnny Leeze
Prison Officer
Gary Kitching
Mark Hamer
Chris Judge
Phillip King
Cell Mates
Ian Cosier
Tristen Preger
Prisoners
Mark Scott
Hospital Prisoner
Jon Dine
John Geoghegan
Irfan Arshad
Schoolboys
Benjamin Hinit
Donna Brophie
Lindsay Brophie
Zoe Holmes
Adam Thompson
Estate Kids

6,550 feet
(at 25fps)
70 minutes

In colour

Bradford, late 80s. Teenager Simon Willerton is bullied at school. His friend Annie and the 'progressive' headmaster, who encourages Simon's free-form poetry, look out for him. After school Simon helps an old man, Tom, by cooking for him, before returning home to a dispiriting, silent dinner. Marie, a school friend, agrees to go out with Simon, but he is kept in at home. On the advice of the school caretaker Simon persists, and he and Marie eventually meet. Marie is mocked by classmates for dating Simon, but encouraged by Annie she sings Simon's praises, to his delight.

On leaving school Simon takes a YTS job in a canteen. He mixes up the orders, but wins over the customers

with an impersonation of Norman Wisdom, just as he amuses the children in his street by impersonating Elvis Presley. Simon is given a council flat. But just as he is settling in, a gang of local youths led by the violent Toddy take advantage of him, adopting the flat as their base, and persuading Simon to take part in their petty crimes. Failing to turn up for work, he also falls behind with bills. Simon gets a job selling newspapers, but Toddy and the gang appropriate his earnings. His flat is boarded up and he is forced to sleep rough. Returning to the flat by day he finds Toddy and the others stripping the boiler, a crime for which Simon is later charged. He is remanded in custody.

In the remand home, Simon is bullied and beaten up. He writes repeatedly to his parents, but receives no reply. After one failed attempt to commit suicide by slashing his wrists, Simon hangs himself three weeks before his eighteenth birthday.

Criminal is elliptical, particularly when it comes to its young hero's family background. Yet the sketchiness is integral to the film's power. Emphasising effects rather than causes, *Criminal* retains a clarity that a more thorough 'case study' might have lost. What's more, resisting making all the connections is in a way more true to life. Here and there, Simon's behaviour provokes concern among adults, but apparently none of them was sharing the information. Only the viewer gets the whole story.

At times, Simon comes across as a benign, junior version of Johnny, the character played by David Thewlis in Mike Leigh's *Naked*, passing on arcane knowledge with a passionate verbal fluency. He is something of a pantheist, seeing God everywhere. Before eating, he prays to the appropriate food gods, leaving the god of ravioli until last as it is a complicated, tripartite god of pasta, meat and tomatoes.

Simon is the vulnerable, isolated child familiar from most classrooms (and most classroom dramas). But away from the casual brutality of school, he opens up, ready to joke and perform, entertaining young children and his middle-aged workmates alike. Outside the destructive, vicious environments which eventually chew him up, Simon can develop and take control. By showing this possibility, rather than presenting us with a mere victim, scriptwriter Vincent O'Connell makes Simon's death hit all the harder. As Simon, Paul Popplewell is excellent, succeeding with a range that moves from timidity through an extrovert defence mechanism to despair.

The script is sometimes too willing to take sides in a tub-thumping fashion. The headmaster's challenge – "Quantify that" – to the financiers after reading out Simon's 'jazz' poetry is hackneyed, and the partying crowd laughing at Simon sleeping rough is a cheap shot. But *Criminal* is mostly absorbed by Simon. Campbell-Hill directs thoughtfully, making good use

of changes of tempo and contrasts in open and closed space. This is particularly effective at the start, when Simon is dazzled by a television image of the world and it emerges from the set to float with him; a feeling of freedom swiftly followed by a rush of boys bearing down upon him. The possibility of escape and the threat of enclosure provide the film's rhythm, until the camera fixes on Simon facing nothing but a cell wall. *Criminal*'s final words, uttered by a warden who asks whether Simon went out as a "swinger" or as a "slasher", indicate the only choice Simon thought he had left.

Robert Yates

TV FILMS

In the Cold Light of Day

United Kingdom 1994

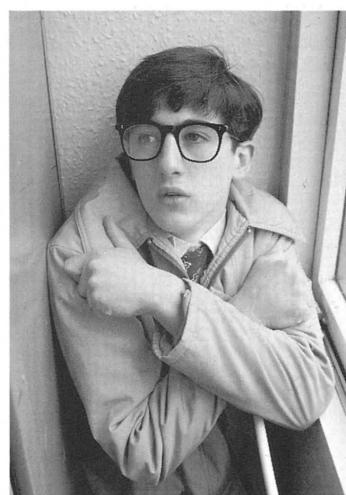
Director: Richard Monks

Distributor
BBC TV
Production Company
BBC
For Screen Two
Executive Producer
George Faber
Producer
Tatiana Kennedy
Associate Producer
Tim Ironside-Wood
Production Co-ordinator
Alexandra Todd
Locations Production Manager
Alan Charlesworth
Assistant Directors
Paul Dale
Emma Turner
Helen Kelley
Casting Director
Emma Style
Screenplay
Richard Monks
Continuity
Irene Chawko
Script Editor
Anna Price
Director of Photography
Gerry Floyd
Visual Effects Designer
Stuart Brisdon
Graphic Designer
Christine Buttner
Film Editor
John Stothart
Designer
Jock Scott
Art Director
Richard Bridgland
Costume Design
Jill Taylor
Make-up Designer
Caroline Noble
Make-up Artist
Kay Bilk
Music
Philip Appleby
Dubbing Editors
Catherine Hodgson
Katharine Norbury
Sound Recordist
John Paine
Dubbing Mixer
Aad Wirtz
Stunt Arranger
Denise Ryan

Cast
Ronald Pickup
Morris
Stephanie Cole
Alice
Bernard Hepton
Len
Margery Withers
Old Mother
Frances Barber
Young Mother
Jim Carter
Young Father
Michael Friel
Young Morris
Laura Tristram
Young Alice
Denis Lill
Mr Loveless
Linda Bassett
Mrs Loveless
Dean Burgin
Young Len
David De Keyser
Mr Shukman
Carol Macready
Mrs Vile
Maggie Jones
Mrs Baggot
Peter Stockbridge
Frank
Peter Penry Jones
Doctor
Martyn Whitby
Policeman
Romy Baskerville
Landlady
John Levitt
Man in suit

6,095 feet
(at 25fps)
65 minutes

In colour



Youth and Wisdom: Paul Popplewell

ply, symbolised by a pylon in the back garden. While mother relishes the opportunity to show off her modern domestic conveniences to the neighbours, young Morris becomes fascinated by electric bulbs, associating their glow with the light of God.

Five decades on, Alice seems resentful of Morris' past actions, while he in turn feels isolated by the rest of the family. Further glimpses of the past reveal Morris' unorthodox religious opinions shocking his mother's church-going acquaintances, while a coastal holiday with next door neighbours the Lovelesses sees Morris and Alice falling into the water after an unsuccessful attempt to take home a seafront light bulb as a souvenir. Such incidents increase his mother's exasperation at the son she believes to be abnormal.

Morris spends most of the next 50 years in mental care, the friction between himself and Alice caused by his disclosure of her illicit sexual liaison with Len Loveless, the shy boy next door (and later her husband). At this point, Morris' confused reaction is to throw Alice's clothes over the pylon, causing a major family bust-up that prompts him to seek refuge in church. He is subsequently caught wheeling a statue of the Madonna through the streets, leading his mother at last to seek psychiatric help for him. Soon afterwards Morris is taken away in a police car.

Back in 1993, Morris' mother regains consciousness and traces her collapse on the steps of the local library to the surprise of seeing Morris again. He drives her back to the home he has inherited from her late husband and since bedecked in electric bulbs. At last she asks his forgiveness and he speaks of his recurring dream of happiness as a tower of lights.

Writer-director Richard Monks' film for the Screen Two slot does pretty well by its single idea, using the first-time connection of domestic electricity supply as the catalyst in generating a family chronicle of dreams and disappointments. Crucially, this brave new world of instant light is impressively represented by the creation of a national grid pylon in the family's

back garden, a monument to progress that allows Monks' craning camera to play with 'futuristic' visual patterns of criss-crossing girderwork. It also enables the film to ground mother Frances Barber's and son Michael Friel's contrasting and (to latterday eyes) apparently extreme reactions in some degree of credibility. While the dawning of power on tap throws the *mater familias* into a consumerist whirl of interior lighting, clunking vacuum cleaners, early model toasters and blinding sun lamps, it sparks in Friel's adolescent fantasist Morris a bizarre mental fusion of technological and religious deities. For him, the glow from an electric bulb becomes synonymous with the light of God, an unorthodox statement of faith that is to embarrass his mother when proclaimed in the presence of sundry church-going townsfolk and eventually lead to his being placed in psychiatric care for most of his life.

The 90s framing device – which brings Morris' sister Alice (a stern Stephanie Cole) into the fray again and reveals that one-time boy-next-door and object of her teenage desires Len Loveless (Bernard Hepton typically cast in dithering mode) is now her much put-upon husband – shifts into and out of view with a staccato rhythm that underlines the fact that too many memories, confessions and recriminations are crushed into a restricted narrative space. The fair amount of workaday storytelling in the wartime background suggests that another draft or two of the script might have paid dividends. Honey-voiced David De Keyser as a kindly shopkeeper is always a welcome presence, for instance, but his role as German-Jewish-homosexual outsider looks a bit like lazy dramatic shorthand.

In his favour, though, Monks is confident with the kind of period detail (lingering over light fittings and so on) most television films render in mere approximations. The dialogue, left-field Alan Bennett in the absurdity of its hyperrealism – "Liver's always been the bugbear with me," opines dullard neighbour Mr Loveless before going on to play a pudding-listing game with his equally anally retentive spouse – also displays a talent to watch. Most striking of all, however, is the way in which the two central characters' ostensibly divergent obsessions are dovetailed: if mother's will to conformism is destroyed by her family's sheer individuality, young Morris' seeming eccentricity disguises his pleas for a mum's love. The madonna bedecked in fairy lights that he wheels through the back streets might represent the boy's most outré act of craziness, but what else is it if not an extravagant gesture towards his need for a mother figure. Finally, his recurring vision of a tower of lights is realised in a long-delayed return to the hearth with his now elderly mother: here at last, peppered with lights of every shape and size for the occasion, is a place called home.

Trevor Johnston

video

Mark Kermode and Peter Dean highlight their ten video choices of the month, and overleaf review, respectively, the rest of the rental and retail releases

VIDEO CHOICE



Dreaming: Jorge Sanz in 'Belle Epoque'

Belle Epoque

Director Fernando Trueba/Spain 1992

This year's winner for the Best Foreign Film Oscar is a good-looking tale of young love in troubled times. Fernando (Jorge Sanz), a soldier who deserts the army on the eve of the Spanish republic, spends a night in a remote village reading to elderly painter Manolo (Fernando Fernán Gómez) instead of with

the local whore. Fernando stays on at the house and is delighted when Manolo's four beautiful daughters visit for the summer – each one in turn seducing him. Although the sentiment is slight, the story brims over with charm and *joie de vivre*. The mix of eroticism, farce and nostalgia is reminiscent of *Like Water for Chocolate*. (S&S April 1994)

● Retail: Curzon CV 0044; Price £15.99; Subtitles; Certificate 15



Beware of the woods: 'The Virgin Spring'

The Virgin Spring (Jungfrukällan)

Director Ingmar Bergman/Sweden 1960

Based on thirteenth-century folklore, Bergman's film explores themes of religion and guilt within a medieval setting. A virgin girl is raped and killed by goat herders while en route to deliver candles for mass. Unwittingly, the girl's killers take refuge at her parents' farm where their crime is discovered after

they try to sell the girl's bloodied robe to her mother (a haunting moment in which the mother, realising that her daughter is dead, holds the robe as if it were her lifeless body). Two of the many incredible scenes that make the flesh quiver are the long retribution sequence (played in almost total silence) and the spring appearing after the father pledges his belief in God. Doom-laden and beautiful. (MFB No. 330)

● Retail: Tartan Video TVT 1102; Price £15.99; B/W; Subtitles; Certificate 15

Dark Waters

Director Mariano Baino/Russia/Ukraine 1993

Mariano Baino's first feature – made on a minuscule budget and shot on a desolate Ukrainian beach – is a triumph of will over harsh realities. *Dark Waters* is an ambitious tale of horror with lofty aspirations and little sense of conformity. An Englishwoman (Louise Salter) travels to a remote Crimean island on a quest to unravel the secrets of a bizarre religious order. As in his impressive short *Caracula*, Baino's strength lies in creating atmospheric visuals – from labyrinthine catacombs illuminated by hundreds of candles to sombre landscapes and strange castle interiors. Rather than just paying tribute to Dario Argento and Mario Bava, the Italian-born director uses the imagery to create his own distinct style. Sadly the on-screen feats are undermined by a shoddy soundtrack (lacklustre music and poor dubbing) which fails to create the necessary tension, and a rubbery-monster finale which lacks the eerie charm of the earlier haunting effects. Variable fare, but showing signs of talent worth nurturing.

● Rental: Tartan Video TVT 1156; Certificate 18; 94 minutes; Producer Victor Zuev; Screenplay Mariano Baino, Andrew Bark; Lead Actors Louise Salter, Venera Simmons, Maria Kapnist

In the Name of the Father

Director Jim Sheridan/Ireland/UK/USA 1993

Sheridan's dramatic re-interpretation of the Guildford Four trial (based on the memoirs of Gerry Conlon) may play fast and loose with some of the case's details, but its bold engagement of the audience and intelligent treatment of thorny political issues is accurate and astute. Daniel Day-Lewis excels in the central role as Conlon and Emma Thompson as his lawyer enjoys some impressively fanciful shouting matches in the courtroom showdown. However, it is Peter Postlethwaite who steals the show in an Oscar-nominated supporting role as Gerry's father. The excellent use of 70s period music and location photography (particularly in the early scenes) evoke a lively and authentic milieu.

(S&S March 1994)

● Rental: CIC VHA 1720; Certificate 15



Mistaken identity: Daniel Day-Lewis



Tearful moments: Anthony Hopkins

Shadowlands

Director Richard Attenborough/UK 1993

William Nicholson made three significant alterations to his stage play (formerly a TV drama) about the marriage of author C. S. Lewis to free-spirited American Joy Gresham; he removed the play's fantasy element, added a sequence in which Lewis and the terminally ill Gresham venture out of Oxford in search of the mythical Golden Valley and inserted a bedroom scene (handled with tact and sensitivity) in which the sexual nature of the couple's relationship is broached. Ironically, despite these major alterations it is the substitution of Nigel Hawthorne with Anthony Hopkins in the lead role which is the biggest change. While Hawthorne sought out every moment of levity in the script, Hopkins plays it straight, provoking unrestrained tears. The result is an emotional *tour de force*. Essential viewing for sentimentalists and cynics alike. (S&S March 1994)

● Rental: CIC VHC 3022; Certificate U

Serial Mom

Director John Waters/USA 1994

Irresponsible, tasteless, stupid and offensive – John Waters' latest movie is everything you would expect from America's leading schlock director. After such dopey fare as *Undercover Blues*, Kathleen Turner decides to swap rubbish for trash, turning in a sterling performance as a homicidal Baltimore *hausfrau*. Beverly Sutphin (Mom) takes her motherly duties very seriously and woe betide anyone who snubs her children or steps out of line. Waters defends his movie with the delightful explanation that most of Beverly's victims "deserved to die" and that his preferred tag-line for the film was "Serial Mom... at least she meant well." (S&S June 1994)

● Rental: Guild G8768; Certificate 18



I'm home...: Kathleen Turner

The Company of Strangers

Director Cynthia Scott/Canada 1990

A group of elderly women travelling by bus find themselves stranded in remote countryside and seek refuge in a deserted house near the place where one of them spent part of her childhood. Foraging for food and sleeping rough, the group grin and bear their predicament, bonding through shared reminiscences. In a brave experiment Scott mixes fact and fiction using non-actors in lead roles and filming the women's interaction in a documentary style. The montages of family photographs that are cut into the film add moments of pathos without becoming sentimental – for example, when the octogenarian Beth drops her guard (and her wig), a photo of her dead son as a baby is shown on the screen. It is rare to see old age handled with such dignity. (S&S May 1991)

● Retail: Electric Video EP 0068; Price £15.99; Certificate PG



Alive and well: 'The Company of Strangers'



Small town thoughts: Leonardo DiCaprio and Johnny Depp

What's Eating Gilbert Grape

Director Lasse Hallström/USA 1993

In desolate backwater Endora, Iowa, delivery boy Gilbert Grape (Johnny Depp) looks after his mentally unstable brother Arnie (Leonardo DiCaprio), his gigantically overweight mother (Darlene Cates) and his sexually frustrated customers. Adapted by Peter Hedges from his novel, this wonderful,

observational comedy drama fits snugly into Lasse Hallström's quirky oeuvre. As in *My Life As a Dog*, it features a young actor (DiCaprio) from whom Hallström coaxes an impressive misfit performance and, as with *Once Around*, it portrays the adults as warts 'n' all weirdos. More significantly, it continues Johnny Depp's increasing choice of what he calls "non-judgmental" scripts, as well as cementing DiCaprio's reputation as Hollywood's hottest talent. (S&S May 1994)

● Rental: EV EVV 1301; Certificate 12



Rough trade: 'Noir et blanc'

Noir et blanc

Director Claire Devers/France 1986

Extraordinary, atmospheric study of the 80s body beautiful fad. In sharp contrast to the pouting and strutting of James Bridges' 1985 *Perfect*, Devers' interest is in the dark side of the pain/pleasure syndrome central to gym life. Accountant Antoine (Francis Frappat) embarks on a sado-masochistic journey of self-discovery with the aid of a black masseur (Jacques Martial). Antoine is seduced by the gym and pampers himself by using its pool and sauna. But instead of taking the health route, he veers around from pumping his muscles and has them pummelled and eventually broken in an increasingly violent series of massages. The harshness of the club and its environment is emphasised by the stark, grainy black and white photography, and the atmosphere of machinery and machismo also helps to explain Antoine's descent into madness. (MFB No. 651)

● Retail: Electric Video EP 0063; Price £15.99; B/W; Subtitles; Certificate 18



Dreams and nightmares: Fellini's 'Giulietta degli spiriti'

Giulietta degli spiriti (Juliet of the Spirits)

Director Federico Fellini/Italy/France 1965

Fellini's first foray into colour is a spectacular affair with the director's imagination having run riot. The impish Giulietta Masina stars as a bored middle-aged housewife who suspects that her husband Giorgio (Mario Pisu) is having an affair. Fellini – helped by Gianni Di Venanzo's camerawork and Piero

Gheradi's gaudy, outlandish designs – fills the screen with bizarre sequences that create a visual intensity that is hard to match (the weird scene in which Giulietta visits a guru-like medium is as unsettling as any modern horror). It has been labelled a "female version of 8½" but the portrayal of Giulietta as a dreamer probably would not win any plaudits from feminists. (MFB No. 386) ● Retail: Fabulous Films WCC 4074; Price £15.99; Widescreen; Subtitles; Certificate 15

Reviews in *Monthly Film Bulletin* and *Sight and Sound* are cited in parentheses. A retail video that has previously been reviewed in the rental section will be listed only and the film review reference given. The term 'Premiere' refers to a film that has had no prior UK theatrical release and is debuting on video. □ denotes closed captioning facility

Rental

The Ballad of Little Jo

Director Maggie Greenwald; USA 1993; Columbia TriStar CVT 19481; Certificate 15
With the current vogue for revisionist Westerns, this is an interesting offering focusing on the true-life story of nineteenth-century heroine Josephine Monaghan who spent the greater part of her life posing as a man. Greenwald's screenplay and direction are authentic and engaging, and full of witty observations about gender difference. The main problem is Suzy Amis in the lead role who, despite earnest efforts, can't help looking like a woman. (S&S April 1994)

Benefit of the Doubt

Director Jonathan Heap; USA/Germany 1993; Warner V013097; Certificate 18
Disposable junk about an ageing crazy (Donald Sutherland) who is let out on parole after serving 22 years for killing his wife – but did he do it? Amy Irving as his daughter looks distressed – as indeed she should. (S&S December 1993)

Flight of the Innocent (La Corsa dell'innocente)

Director Carlo Carlei; Italy 1993; Touchstone D341102; Certificate 18
A worthy but plodding political thriller set in Southern Italy which, although often brutal, never quite achieves the level of gritty realism to which it aspires. Young Manuel Colao is impressive as Vito, a child who finds himself on the run after his family are murdered. (S&S April 1994)

Hear No Evil

Director Robert Greenwald; USA 1993; EVV 1256; Certificate 15
Weak reworking of *Wait Until Dark* with the talents of deaf actress Marlee Matlin under-used. A crooked reporter hides a stolen ancient coin in the vibrating bleep of a deaf physical trainer. Greenwald directs the preposterous story with no panache or appreciation of its comic potential. (S&S March 1994)

The House of the Spirits

Director Bille August; Germany/Denmark/Portugal 1993; EVV 1300; Certificate 15
A soggy lump of a movie, clumsily adapted by writer/director Bille August from Isabel Allende's successful novel. Saddled with an unworkable script the talented cast – Meryl Streep, Glenn Close, Winona Ryder, Antonio Banderas and Jeremy Irons – give awful performances. (S&S April 1994)

The Joy Luck Club

Director Wayne Wang; USA 1993; Touchstone E312392; Certificate 15
At a farewell party for a young Chinese-American woman, four ageing women relive the traumas of their past. Wang's



Remembering past lives: 'The Joy Luck Club'

marathon soap opera, which veers from touching to torturous, bears producer Oliver Stone's trademark of weighty overstatement and emotional hyperbole. Paudits go to Rachel Portman's score with its fusion of eastern and western music perfectly enhancing the dramatic tone. (S&S April 1994)

Kalifornia

Director Dominic Sena; USA 1993; 20.20 Vision NVT 16907; Certificate 18
An unnecessary addition to the serial killer genre. Two down-at-heel maniacs (Brad Pitt and Juliette Lewis) hitch a cross-country ride with a couple of educated, arty poseurs (David Duchovny and Michelle Forbes). Tim Metcalfe's contrived script features voice-over waffle about the "heart of darkness within man", but is unable to reach below the glossy surface. Bojan Bazelli's cinematography is wasted in pan-and-scan. (S&S April 1994)

Mr Wonderful

Director Anthony Minghella; USA 1992; Touchstone D312392; Certificate 15
Amiable, frisky comic fodder from the director of *Truly, Madly, Deeply*. Electrical engineer Gus (Matt Dillon in a likeable performance) struggles to find a perfect partner for his ex-wife Annabella Scierra (always a treat to watch) so as to free him from his alimony payments. (S&S November 1993)

My New Gun

Director Stacy Cochran; USA 1992; 20.20 Vision NVT 16875; Certificate 15
A suburban man with an emotionally unstable wife buys her a handgun, with dire consequences. Writer/director Stacy Cochran meant this meandering drama to comment on consumerism and the fetishisation of weapons (as well as the dark side of urban life), but you wish the protagonists would shoot each other and be done with it. (S&S May 1994)

On Deadly Ground

Director Steven Seagal; USA 1994; Warner V013227; Certificate 15
Ridiculous action movie in which Steven Seagal blows up oil refineries in the name of ecological preservation. Demolitions expert Forrest Taft (Seagal) gets in touch with native Alaskans, discovers the wolf-beast in his soul and romances Joan Chen. Michael Caine (with a terrible American accent) plays the evil boss. (S&S May 1994) □

Philadelphia

Director Jonathan Demme; USA 1993; Columbia TriStar CVT 19882; Certificate 12
Jonathan Demme's affecting, big-budget, big-star Aids movie works on the level of mainstream tear-jerker, pitching at an audience who may not usually feel empathy toward homosexuals. Tom Hanks plays a high-powered lawyer whose illness costs him his job. Hanks' role as a likeable all-rounder – charming, witty and middle-class – lacks any overtly gay mannerisms (other than the cliché of being an opera lover) and this down-playing of the gay issue unsurprisingly alienated many non-straight audiences. (S&S March 1994)

Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit

Director Bill Duke; USA 1993; Buena Vista D341942; Certificate 15
After the excellent *Deep Cover* Duke goes belly-up for the Hollywood dollar and directs this piece of humourless rubbish. Whoopi Goldberg stars as a music teacher at a ghetto school. Duke should be ashamed. (S&S April 1994) □

Stalingrad

Director Joseph Vilsmaier; Germany 1992; EVV 1286; Certificate 15
Although former cinematographer Vilsmaier's wartime epic loses its visual power in the transfer to small screen, its dramatic edge remains sharp. Released in Germany to coincide with the fiftieth anniversary of their crucial defeat, *Stalingrad* recounts the story of the bloodiest battle of the Second World War (almost two million men died) with harrowing power. (S&S May 1994)

That Night

Director Craig Bolotin; USA 1992; Warner V012572; Certificate 15
Shelved for several years before sneaking out for a brief UK theatrical release, Craig Bolotin's off-beat rites-of-passage



'Mr Wonderful'

movie, although flawed, is a small success. Set in an American backwater in the early 60s, seven-year-old Alice (Eliza Dushku) develops an infatuation with a reckless teenager (Juliette Lewis) and her rebel boyfriend (C. Thomas Howell). Bolotin's atmospheric evocation of a long, hot small-town summer is particularly well done. (S&S June 1994) □

Wayne's World 2

Director Stephen Surjik; USA 1993; CIC VHB 2897; Certificate 15
More post-Bill & Ted japes from the Aurora air-heads. As with *Wayne's World*, the sequel lacks structure (although some scenes succeed – memorably the Kung Fu movie spoof) and the attempt to add an air of maturity to the proceedings just doesn't work. (S&S March 1994)

Rental premiere

The Cisco Kid

Director Luis Valdez; USA 1993; First Independent VA 20219; Certificate PG; 91 minutes; Producers Gary Goodman, Barry Rosen; Screenplay Michael Kane, Luis Valdez; Lead Actors Jimmy Smits, Cheech Marin, Bruce Payne, Ron Perlman, Sadie Frost
In Mexico in 1867, reluctant folk hero Francisco Solarez (Smits) and rotund rogue Pancho Rivera (Marin) stand up for the peasants against the occupying French army. While Valdez's direction lacks the sparkle of *La Bamba*, this amiable romp benefits from Smits' performance and some pleasant background scenery. Sadie Frost looks fetching in an array of extravagant frocks, but her French accent is as ill-fitting as Payne's.

The Counterfeit Contessa

Director Ron Lagomarsino; USA 1994; FoxVideo 8608; Certificate U; 87 minutes; Producer Iain Paterson; Screenplay Christine Burrill, Randy Johnson, Scott Davis Jones; Lead Actors Tea Leoni, D.W. Moffat, David Beecroft
A young model woos a wealthy aristocrat after she is mistaken for a contessa. An innocuous nostalgic comedy remarkable for its strange screen credits (Scott Davis Jones is billed as a "re-writer") and wide-of-the-mark video sleeve notes – "From the producers of *And the Band Played On*, *River's Edge* and *Desperately Seeking Susan*."

The Dark

Director Craig Pryce; Canada 1993; Hi Fliers HFV 8276; Certificate 18; 88 minutes; Producers Robert Bergman, Craig Pryce; Screenplay Robert C. Cooper; Lead Actors Stephen McHattie, Cynthia Belliveau, Jaimz Woolvett, Brian James
A rugged scientist and a cynical FBI agent pursue a large rodent through underground caves below a cemetery. Craig Pryce's low-budget horror, although a throwback, has none of the anarchic charm of the early Corman cheapies. Effects man Ron Stefaniuk's laughable creature (a shaggy head with teeth on a stick) is seen too often and the lighting does it few favours. Of interest for its vague animal rights musings.

Getting Out

Director John Korty; USA 1994; Certificate 15; 94 minutes; Producer Dorothea Petrie; Screenplay Eugene Corr; Ruth Shapiro;

PRIVATE VIEW

Maggie Greenwald on her Western 'The Ballad of Little Jo'

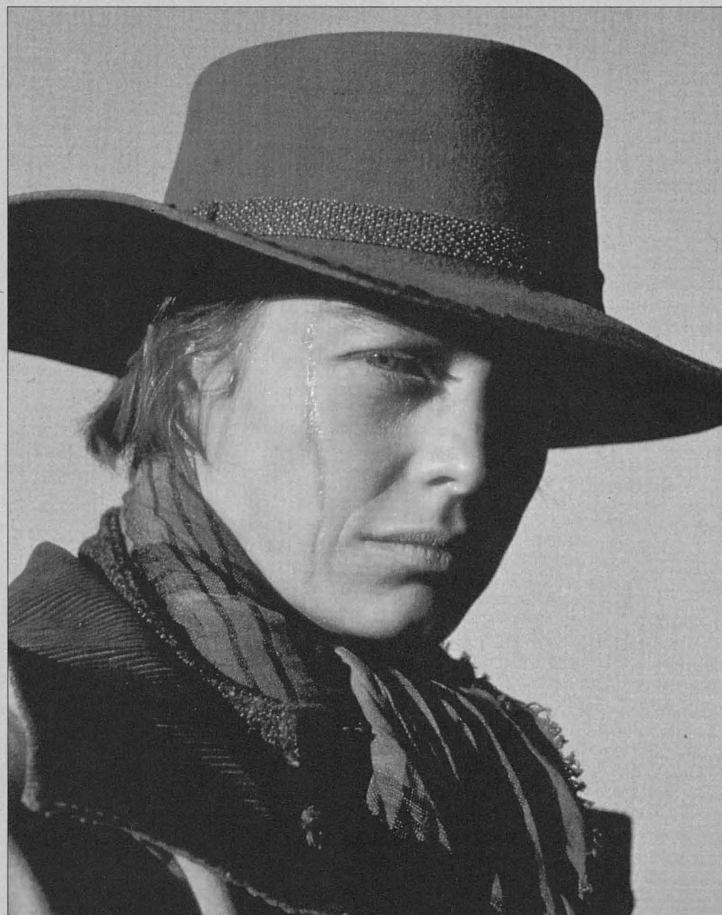
Cowgirls

Since I was a little girl I have wanted to make a Western (*The Searchers*, *High Noon*, *The Magnificent Seven*, *Once Upon a Time in the West*, *The Wild Bunch*, *The Ballad of Cable Hogue* and *McCabe and Mrs Miller* remain a few of my favourites). It did not occur to me until I was grown-up that women were – with rare exceptions – excluded from my favourite genre. When I became a director I assumed that the only reason women were excluded from making Westerns (and indeed from most genres) was because we did not make movies – yet. Naive? Perhaps. But I still believe this to be the gist of the issue.

But back to my Western, *The Ballad of Little Jo*. After I finished *The Kill-Off*, a noir-thriller based on a Jim Thompson novel (stepping on more 'male' territory – what could I be up to?), I knew it was time to make my Western. I wanted a story which had a woman as its central character, and I knew the challenge was to find the right story. By chance I stumbled on information about Little Jo Monaghan. Fascinated, I tracked down an article published after Little Jo had died in the Idaho newspaper *The Mountain Gazette*. The headline announced "Cowboy Jo Was A Woman!" After that, the idea for the film just took off. Here was a story of a woman which fulfilled the conventions of the Western and one that I was interested in exploring. The premise was perfect – a tale of a rugged individualist who carves a place for herself in the American West. It was an idea that resonated with women's issues, as well as being a classic story that a contemporary audience could identify with.

Little is known about the real Jo Monaghan's life except that which I included at the beginning and end of the film. Josephine Monaghan was a society girl who had a child out of wedlock. Cast out by her family, she disappeared and when she eventually reappeared out West, she had assumed the identity of a man. The rest of her life was spent as Jo. According to *The Mountain Gazette*, Little Jo was a recluse who led a meagre, lonely life working as a ranch-hand. She had a brief stint as a bronco-buster, sent money home to her sister who looked after her child and, eventually, was able to own a small homestead. After she died, a few letters from her sister and a daguerreotype of Josephine were found, thus revealing her true identity.

Rather than just tell the story of how Little Jo kept her secret, I was intrigued by why she had led this double life – a decision so unique, heroic and, ultimately, sensible. My questions became the basis of a screenplay in which I wove my own tale of why a young woman would assume a male identity and what might have happened to make her stay within it. I began by writing what I thought was the story of a woman who becomes a man, but I soon realised I was writing about a woman who becomes a true woman. By hiding her outer self from the world she finally had the freedom to fulfil her inner self.



Reclaiming the Western: Suzy Amis in 'The Ballad of Little Jo'

I claimed for my Jo (and for myself) iconic images which make the Western so appealing – the sight of a rider galloping across a hillside on horseback; the act of surviving in the wilderness; the struggle to defend yourself, your home and freedom when under attack; the joy of fulfilled sexuality.

Finding the right actress to play Jo was another journey. We saw hundreds of actresses – famous and unknown – but Suzy Amis was the only one who embraced all the qualities necessary to fulfill the role and carry the film. When I first met Suzy I was taken by her prettiness and femininity. She had waist-length strawberry blonde hair tied back with a bow. Her reading was quiet, natural and stunning. A striking androgynous quality began to emerge and I realised that although Suzy looked delicate, she was in fact very strong. Here was my Jo.

Aside from the usual work involved in building the 'inside' of a character for a part, this one required a tremendous amount of outside work. Suzy surrendered herself completely to the training process – using a body trainer, a movement and voice coach, as well as taking lessons in horse riding, shooting and even sheep herding. She was also willing to have her trademark long hair cut on camera.

The release of any film is a difficult ride, but when it turns out to be as

controversial as *The Ballad of Little Jo* the ride becomes a hair-raising rollercoaster. There were a lot of pissed off male critics ("It made me want to go home and watch *Bonanza*") and one prominent lesbian critic was so angry that cowgirl Jo was heterosexual, she seemed to misunderstand that the film's central issue was about gender not sexuality.

It has been a year since *The Ballad of Little Jo* opened in New York, and its release has taken a very different, more provocative course than the one I anticipated. The thing that sticks most in my mind is the powerful personal experiences which people have had from the film and shared with me. For instance, I sat in the back of a preview group who were discussing the film; a young woman recounted how in the last year or so she had lost interest in going to the movies, and how strangely unmoved she was by the films that she had seen. She said that while watching *The Ballad of Little Jo* she discovered a film that reflected her point of view and experience of life and realised what she had been missing from cinema, not just in the past year, but for a long time.

We need stories to know ourselves and to validate our existence. If we don't tell our own stories we come to see ourselves as we are told we are by others – in their stories. *'The Ballad of Little Jo'* is a Columbia TriStar rental release

Lead Actors Rebecca De Mornay, Robert Knepper, Carol Mitchell-Leon, Richard Jenkins, Ellen Burstyn

A teenage hooker leaves prison after eight years, and enters the world as a traumatised young woman desperate to win back her long lost son. John Korty's made-for-TV adaptation of Marsha Norman's stage play is a worthy drama which highlights a hidden side to De Mornay's talents. Oscar-winner Ellen Burstyn makes a brief cameo appearance.

Ice

Director Brook Yeaton; USA 1994; Imperial Entertainment IMP 151; Certificate 18; 90 minutes; Producers Joseph Merhi, Richard Pepin; Screenplay Sean Dash; Lead Actors Traci Lords, Zach Galligan, Phillip Troy, Jorge Rivero Former porn star Traci Lords continues her work in mainstream movies with this by-numbers action vehicle. A jewel thief's wife is pursued by cops and gangsters following a heist. Lords is emerging as a glamorous action heroine, but her character's spurious sideline as a cabaret singer doesn't sit well. The obligatory sex scene is remarkable in that Lords keeps her underwear on in the shower!

Judgment Night

Director Stephen Hopkins; USA 1993; Universal VHA 1756; Certificate 18; 105 minutes; Producer Gene Levy; Screenplay Lewis Colick, Kevin Jarre; Lead Actors Emilio Estevez, Cuba Gooding Jnr, Denis Leary, Stephen Dorff Four young men in a van turn off a Los Angeles motorway and become caught in a nocturnal urban hell. Scriptwriter Colick's efficient thriller takes a new twist on the *Trespass* scenario by deliberately mixing up the racial elements – African-American Cuba Gooding Jnr is cast as a yuppie intruder while the vicious gang who rule the ghetto are all white trash led by Denis Leary. Hopkins' direction is streets ahead of his earlier work (in particular *Predator 2*) and he coaxes impressive performances from the ensemble cast. Top quality exploitation fare.

Monolith

Director John Eyres; USA 1993; First Independent VA 20216; Certificate 18; 91 minutes; Producer Geoff Griffiths; Screenplay Stephen Lister; Lead Actors Bill Paxton, Lindsay Frost, Louis Gossett Jnr, John Hurt An alien beast which can possess humans leaps from one host to another, pursued by hard-nosed cops Paxton and Frost. Effects man Nick Davis struggles to portray cataclysmic confrontations within a limited budget, scoring some early successes but coming unstuck at the end. Paxton and Frost make a great wise-cracking double-act whose comic schtick puts the rest of the script to shame. John Hurt in a villainous cameo has a terrible American accent, but seems to enjoy the silly proceedings.

Pentathlon

Director Bruce Malmuth; Germany 1994; First Independent VA 20218; Certificate 15; 97 minutes; Producer Martin E. Caan; Screenplay William Standiem, Gary McDonald, Gary Devore, Bruce Malmuth; Lead Actors Dolph Lundgren, David Soul, Renee Coleman, Roger E. Mosley A muscular East German athlete defects during the 1988 Seoul Olympics and in revenge his trainer-cum-secret-

policeman kills his father. With the fall of the Berlin wall a year later the two rivals are able to settle their differences. Casting David Soul as a psychotic East German has comic potential but Malmuth plays it straight throughout this dreary thriller. Dolph flexes his muscles but demonstrates little of his usual thespian flair.

Police Story 3: Supercop

Director Stanley Tong; Hong Kong 1992; Imperial Entertainment IMP 145; Certificate 15; 91 minutes; Producers Willie Chan, Edward Tang; Screenplay Edward Tang, Filre Ma, Lee Wai Yee; Lead Actors Jackie Chan, Michelle Khan, Maggie Cheung, Ken Tsang
More of the same from the prolific Golden Harvest stable, showcasing Chan's extraordinary athletic abilities and likeable screen presence. An undercover detective teams up with the Chinese police to infiltrate a gang of drug traffickers.

Return to Two Moon Junction

Director Farhad Mann; USA 1994; Hi Fliers HFV 8274; Certificate 18; 92 minutes; Producers Mel Pearl, Don Levin; Screenplay Susan Black; Lead Actors Melinda Clarke, John Clayton Schafer, Louise Fletcher
The high priest of soft-core erotica, Zalman King, oversaw this sequel. A disillusioned New York model escapes to the deep South where a muscular sculptor seduces her while saxophones wail. Talented actresses Melinda (Mindy) Clarke and Louise Fletcher do their best to inject credibility into the proceedings, but the trademark King elements (soft-focus, smoky light through venetian blinds, slow-motion sex) make this pretty insufferable.

Skeeter

Director Clark Brandon; USA 1993; Reflective RE 7023; Certificate 15; 92 minutes; Producers James Glenn Dudson, Kelly Andrea Rubin, John Lambert; Screenplay Lanny Horn, Clark Brandon; Lead Actors Tracy Griffith, Jim Youngs, Charles Napier, William Sanderson.
Brandon's bugs-on-the-rampage movie pulls in two different directions. On the one hand, it is an exemplary low-budget drama with beautifully crafted characters (particularly Griffith) enduring emotional traumas in a desolate backwater (unobtrusively captured by Brandon's direction); on the other, the actors become hysterical as rubber mosquitoes wave on strings. Michael J. Pollard appears in an annoying cameo as a madman. This is one of the few horror movies in which you wish the monsters had never showed up.

Retail

Age of Consent

Director Michael Powell; Australia 1969; Tartan Video TVT 1002; Price £15.99; Widescreen; Certificate 15
Not without charm, but a disappointingly slow and repetitious tale about a painter (James Mason) who settles down on a beautiful island off the Great Barrier Reef and falls in love with a young model who poses for him. (MFB No. 611)

Angels Over Broadway

Directors Ben Hecht/Lee Garmes; USA 1940;

Columbia TriStar CVR 12584; Price £10.99; B/W; Certificate U

A sterling script and quirky tone make this passable Broadway-set drama stand out. A zany playwright saves a man from committing suicide and then encounters a wily Douglas Fairbanks Jr who plans to fleece him in a poker game. (MFB No. 85)

Anne and Muriel

(Les Deux anglaises et le continent)

Director François Truffaut; France 1971; Artificial Eye ART 077; Price £15.99; Subtitles; Certificate 15
Comparisons with *Jules et Jim* – Truffaut's first adaptation of a Henri-Pierre Roché novel – sit uncomfortably with this cumbersome tale of a *ménage à trois*. Claude (Jean-Pierre Léaud) spends a holiday with a Welsh family and falls in love with the two daughters. Truffaut attempts to capture the epic sweep of a nineteenth-century novel but the vicissitudes of fate that befall the protagonists are too contrived and tricky. The film's uncertain style and tone fails to create the magic needed. (MFB No. 464)

Army of Darkness

Director Sam Raimi; USA 1992; Guild GLD 51512; Price £10.99; Certificate 15 (S&S June 1993)

The Cat's Paw

Director Sam Taylor; USA 1934; Connoisseur Video CR 162; Price £12.99; B/W; Certificate PG
A Harold Lloyd talkie which relies on gags and plot twists for its fun rather than high speed and altitude thrills. Lloyd plays a Chinese missionary in New York who unwittingly becomes involved in politics. (MFB No. 8)

Demolition Man

Director Marco Brambilla; USA 1993; Warner SO 12985; Price £13.99; Certificate 15 (S&S December 1993) □

Down to Earth

Director Alexander Hall; USA 1947; Columbia TriStar CVR 13616; Price £10.99; Certificate U
A sequel to the 1941 film *Here Comes Mr Jordan* (based on Harry Seagull's play *Heaven Can Wait*) starring Rita Hayworth. A Greek muse of the theatre comes to earth to try and save a Broadway play about the nine muses – and lands the star role by mistake. (MFB No. 164)

The Draughtsman's Contract

Director Peter Greenaway; UK 1982; Artificial Eye ART 095; Price £15.99; Widescreen; Certificate 15 (MFB No. 586)

Fear City

Director Abel Ferrara; USA 1985; Lumiere LUM 2147; Price £10.99; Certificate 18
Hackneyed and clichéd, this below-par thriller stars Tom Berenger as a cop trying to forget his prize-fighter days. When his ex-girlfriend stripper Melanie Griffith has trouble with a killer attacking women in her club, Berenger takes on the case. (MFB No. 631)

The Final Test

Director Anthony Asquith; UK 1953; Odyssey ODY 634; Price £10.99; B/W; Certificate U
Plenty of stiff upper lips are on show in this very British affair. Stan Palmer (Jack Warner) would like his son to watch him



The right appearance: Visconti's 'L'Innocente'

play his final game of cricket in a series against Australia, but instead the son (who fancies himself as a writer) wants to interview an eccentric poet (Robert Morley). (MFB No. 232)

Hot Shots! Part Deux

Director Jim Abrahams; USA 1993; FoxVideo 8507; Price £10.99; Certificate PG (S&S September 1993)

I Am Curious Yellow (Jag är nyfiken-gul)

Director Vilgot Sjöman; Sweden 1967; Jezebel JEZ 001; Price £12.99; Widescreen; B/W; Subtitles; Certificate 18
A rare chance to see this controversial film. A sociologist conducts a survey of Swedish public opinion and observes the varied sexual relations of a young couple. Tame by today's standards and tediously long. The drama-documentary style of the film resembles the cinema vérité work of Jean Rouché. (MFB No. 423)

In Custody (Hifazaat)

Director Ismail Merchant; UK 1993; Curzon CV 0046; Price £15.99; Subtitles; Certificate U
Merchant's directorial debut is a tiresome affair concerning a teacher's plight to try and interview a famous poet. Indian culture (in particular the Urdu language) is shown throughout to be under threat from the West. (S&S June 1994)

In the Line of Fire

Director Wolfgang Petersen; USA 1993; Columbia TriStar CVR 29668; Price £12.99; Certificate 15 (S&S September 1993)

L'Innocente (The Innocent)

Director Luchino Visconti; Italy/France 1976; Fabulous Films WCC 4075; Price £15.99; Widescreen; Subtitles; Certificate 15
Visconti's final film is a sumptuous tragicomedy concerned with the decadence of late nineteenth-century Italian aristocracy. A married man, who is openly having an affair, is outraged when he discovers his wife is doing the same. This widescreen print is superior to the previous panned-and-scanned version. (MFB No. 528)

Jennifer 8

Director Bruce Robinson; USA 1992; Paramount VHR 2748; Price £10.99; Certificate 15 (S&S Video September 1993)

Last Action Hero

Director John McTiernan; USA 1993; Columbia TriStar 29669; Price £12.99; Certificate 15 (S&S August 1993)

Luck, Trust & Ketchup:

Robert Altman in Carver Country

Directors Mike Kaplan/John Dorr; USA 1994; Mainline MPV 010; Price £12.99; Certificate 15
A behind-the-scenes documentary about the making of *Short Cuts*. Altman's *modus operandi* and the interviews with Carver's widow are fascinating to watch, but this is little more than a promotional film. (S&S July 1994)

La Marge

Director Walerian Borowczyk; France 1976; Lighthouse LUM 2141; Price £14.99; Subtitles; Certificate 18
Erotic euro-trash which plays on the stars' (Sylvia Kristel and Joe Dallesandro) risqué reputations. Borowczyk is at his least impressive with this story about unforgettable nights of love overshadowed by domestic tragedy. Aka *The Streetwalker*. (MFB No. 523)

Monique

Director John Bown; UK 1969; Jezebel JEZ 003; Price £12.99; Widescreen; Certificate 18
A *ménage à trois* develops between a sultry French au pair and a young British couple who she works for. A slap-and-tickle version of *Theorem*. (MFB No. 439)

The Moon in the Gutter

(La Lune dans le caniveau)

Director Jean-Jacques Beineix; France/Italy 1983; Artificial Eye ART 099; Widescreen; Subtitles; Price £15.99; Certificate 18
The Cinecittà sets and flamboyant visual style are the only notable points in this tedious film. Gérard Depardieu plays a man who is bent on revenge when his sister commits suicide after being raped. (MFB No. 600)

Montenegro

Director Dusan Makavejev; Sweden/UK 1981; Arrow AVO 16; Price £15.99; Subtitles; Certificate 18
Susan Anspach plays a disgruntled housewife who wanders into a bar and finds herself attracted to the sex and violence she finds there. A hit-and-miss comic farce imbued with Makavejev's (W.R. – *Mysteries of the Organism*) humanist leanings. (MFB No. 574)

ENDNOTES

By Mark Kermode

● Talking last year about one of his artistic mentors, screen composer Michael Nyman posited a novel reason for the prolific output of Ennio Morricone. According to Nyman, Morricone wanted all screen music to be of the highest quality and, aware that not everybody had the same standards, he took on as much work as he could manage (including projects which did not deserve his talent) in order to compensate for the deficiencies of others. He would, suggested Nyman, toil night and day to ensure that as many films as possible had handsome scores.

Since he first began scoring films in Italy in the early 60s, Morricone has worked on around 400 projects, the majority of which are admirable. He has worked with Europe's most influential directors, enhancing their movies with his distinctive style – from the twangy spaghetti sounds of Sergio Leone's *A Fistful of Dollars* (1964) and *Once Upon a Time in the West* (1968), through his acclaimed jarring accompaniment to Pasolini's *Decameron* (1970) and *Salò* (1975), to the epic sweep of Bertolucci's *1900* (1976) and the haunting unresolved tension of Roman Polanski's *Frantic* (1988). In Hollywood, Morricone first gained currency when he was Oscar nominated for Terrence Malick's *Days of Heaven* in 1978, and again in the 80s for Roland Joffé's eighteenth-century epic *The Mission* (1986) and Brian de Palma's lavish gangster throwback *The Untouchables* (1987). He has now become one of the best known of modern screen composers. His name is one of the few – along with John Williams, Jerry Goldsmith and (currently) Michael Nyman – that an average cinemagoer would recognise.

More significantly, Morricone is one of a small group of composers whose recorded work has a guaranteed life beyond the film itself. To collectors, every Morricone score is a 'must have' item, regardless of the artistic qualities or popular success of the film. And in Morricone's case, probably as a result of the protective role he sees himself as playing, his name is associated with some embarrassing flops. While variable horror fare such as *Holocaust 2000* (aka *The Chosen*, 1977) and *The Thing* (1982) appeals to genre aficionados, who represent a reliable section of the soundtrack collectors market, it is hard to imagine what could have attracted Morricone to disastrous projects such as Michael Anderson's post-jaws abomination *Orca...*



Unresolved tension: 'Frantic'

Killer Whale (1977) or Matt Cimber's simpering sex romp *Butterfly* (1981).

Intriguingly, in his latest score for Mike Nichols' *Wolf*, a big-budget, solidly mainstream offering with strong genre crossover appeal, Morricone tips his hat towards two prime examples of his earlier work in which the success of his music exceeded that of the films. The underlying theme of *Wolf*, an imposing, majestic score boldly drawn in brash sweeps, is described by Morricone as a struggle between "the poetic and the primitive, the romantic and the naturalistic." This is realised musically through a repetitive motif in which acoustic instrumentation battles with electronic noise. At regular intervals throughout the score, Morricone's sombre orchestration is rudely interrupted by a cross-cutting rhythmic electronic pattern which resembles a Tangerine Dream synthesiser sequence, consisting of four consecutive and adjoining notes oscillating rapidly in a tight, insect-like fashion. In Nichols' movie, this motif is used to signal the surging of the vulpine blood which inspires the hero to extraordinary athletic, animal feats. It is deliberately intrusive, stumbling across and breaking into the main romantic theme, played out on slow-moving string-based chords by a more traditional orchestra.

Less immediately recognisable, though no less fascinating, is a recurrent wind motif, a series of sharp, clashing notes laid in a distinctly Eastern configuration which eerily echoes "Pazuzu's Theme" from Morricone's score for John Boorman's big-budget failure *The Heretic* (1977). This theme, intended to give character to the ancient Assyrian demon of the south-west wind, was the most distinctive feature of Boorman's film, and its recurrence here in Nichols' latterday werewolf movie (most notably in cue 14, "The Chase", and cue 17 "Third Transition") is both striking and appropriate. In the light of this discovery, it is possible to go back to the main theme from *Wolf*, entitled "Wolf and Love", and see within its melancholic waves elements of "Regan's Theme", which Morricone uses in *The Heretic* as a counterpoint to Pazuzu.

Yet although this musical lineage is alluringly neat there is a more recent source for the haunting string themes of *Wolf* – Morricone's underrated 1988 score for the overlooked serial killer movie *Rampage*. It is here that the most direct precursor of the more fractured elements of *Wolf* can be found. With its unsettling strings, moving almost imperceptibly against each other, and its mixture of sadness, horror and despair, Morricone's *Rampage* represents his finest score – though one criminally ignored except by serious collectors. How satisfying, then, that Morricone has been able to draw on this masterly, grim work to provide an element of psychosis in a movie which attempts to straddle the realistic and the fantastic, past and present, poetic and primitive. In Morricone's score for *Wolf*, serial killers dance with demons against a modern urban background heavy with ancient gothic passion.

Orlando

Director Sally Potter; UK 1992; Electric Video EP 0034; Price £15.99; Certificate PG (S&S March 1993/April 1993)

Nowhere to Run

Director Robert Harmon; USA 1992; Columbia TriStar CVR 28646; Price £12.99; Certificate 15 (S&S June 1993)

Raising Cain

Director Brian De Palma; USA 1992; Universal VHR 1613; Price £12.99; Certificate 15 (S&S December 1992)

The Scent of Green Papaya

(L'Odeur de la papaye verte/Mùi Du Du Xanh)

Director Tran Anh Hung; France 1993; Artificial Eye ART 093; Price £15.99; Widescreen; Subtitles; Certificate U  The magnificent images and atmospheric sounds that are the main attraction of this winning debut, transfer surprisingly well onto video. The story follows the experiences of a country servant girl as she works for a middle-class merchant's family and later for a dashing musician. The director succeeds in capturing the role played by women in Vietnamese society. (S&S April 1994)

Siegfried

Director Fritz Lang; Germany 1924; Tartan Video TVT 1160; Price £15.99; Silent; Certificate U; 86 minutes The first part of Lang's majestic epic *Die Nibelungen* is a spectacular extravaganza with the young hero Siegfried facing a series of adventures. The stylised sets (in particular the landscapes created within a giant Zeppelin hangar) and the special effects are impressive for their time. The only criticism is the absence of a soundtrack. This version is 30 minutes shorter than the original. (MFB No. 509)

The Snapper

Director Stephen Frears; UK 1993; Electric Video EP 0028; Price £12.99; Certificate 15 (S&S June 1993)

Some Came Running

Director Vincente Minnelli; USA 1958; MGM/UA S054966; Price £12.99; Widescreen; Certificate PG A small town is stirred up when aspiring writer Frank Sinatra arrives with his floozy Shirley MacLaine. Quintessential 'rat pack' romantic drama which is highlighted by some fine performances. (MFB No. 304)

Speedy

Director Ted Wilde; USA 1928; Connoisseur Video CR 163; Price £12.99; B/W; Silent; Certificate U Harold Lloyd's final silent film, in which he tries to save the last horse-drawn tram in New York. The climax features Lloyd trying to get Babe Ruth to the baseball game on time. (MFB No. 475)

State of Siege (Etat de siège)

Director Costa-Gavras; France 1973; Arrow AV 014; Price £15.99; Subtitles; Certificate 15 A political fable, similar to Costa-Gavras' *Z*, starring Yves Montand as a CIA hostage captured by left-wing Latin-American guerrillas. (MFB No. 475)

Used People

Director Beeban Kidron; USA 1992; FoxVideo 1992; Price £10.99; Certificate 15 (S&S April 1993)

Utz

Director George Sluizer; UK 1992; Western Connection WEST 017; Price £14.99; Certificate U Charming, wryly-scripted drama which gives Armin Mueller-Stahl the role of a lifetime. Mueller-Stahl plays a dying baron whose porcelain collection is coveted by the Czech state and an American entrepreneur (Peter Riegert) who travels to Prague. Based on the novel by Bruce Chatwin, this is ostensibly a character-driven piece with plenty of humour and feeling. (S&S May 1992)

The Vikings

Director Richard Fleischer; USA 1958; MGM/UA S054966; Price £12.99; Widescreen; Certificate PG Splendid battle scenes, locations and photography highlight this classic adventure in which a romantic triangle develops between the heir to the Viking throne Kirk Douglas, his half-brother Tony Curtis and Janet Leigh. (MFB No. 295)

Retail premiere

American Madness

Director Frank Capra; USA 1932; Columbia TriStar CVR 14356; Price £10.99; B/W; Certificate U; 74 minutes; Producer Frank Capra; Screenplay Robert Riskin; Lead Actors Walter Huston, Pat O'Brien, Constance Cummings Rare Capra drama with Walter Huston giving an excellent performance as an idealistic bank president cocking a snook at the cruelty of the faceless crowd.

Fort Saganne

Director Alain Corneau; France 1984; Lighthouse LUM 2142; Price £14.99; Subtitles; Widescreen; Certificate PG; 180 minutes; Producer Albina du Boisrouvray; Screenplay Henri de Turenne, Louis Gardel, Alain Corneau; Lead Actors Gérard Depardieu, Catherine Deneuve, Philippe Noiret Corneau's little seen epic adventure is the story of a French peasant who becomes a lieutenant in the army during the early twentieth century. Over long, but the Scope cinematography and the performances are impressive.

Girl Shy

Directors Fred Newmeyer/Sam Taylor; USA 1924; Connoisseur Video CR 164; Price £12.99; B/W; Silent; Certificate U; 88 minutes; Producer Harold Lloyd; Story Sam Taylor, Ted Wilde, Tim Whelan, Tommy Gray; Lead Actors Harold Lloyd, Jobyna Ralston, Richard Daniels In his first film without Hal Roach, Harold Lloyd plays a stammering tailor trying to win the affections of Jobyna Ralston. A romantic comedy that incorporates a series of fantasy vignettes.

Virgin Among the Living Dead

(Una Vergine tra i morti viventi)

Director Jesus Franco; France 1971; Redemption RETN 029; Price £12.99; Widescreen; Subtitles; Certificate 18; 85 minutes; Producer CFFP; Screenplay Jesus Franco; Lead Actors Christina von Blanc, Brit Nichols, Howard Vernon A woman travels to a remote village in Honduras to hear the reading of her father's will, and is haunted by erotic visions. Aka Christina, Princesse de l'érotisme.

Letters

Letters are welcome, and should be addressed to the Editor at Sight and Sound, British Film Institute, 21 Stephen Street, London W1P 1PL. Facsimile 071 436 2327

Censored

From Tom Dewe Mathews

It is a peculiar characteristic of Britain's film censorship that so many of its chief censors have had trouble with their eyesight. Now in her review of my book *Censored* (S&S September), the BBFC's deputy director Margaret Ford has made her own contribution to this time-honoured tradition.

For in her opening sentence – in pursuit of the argument that my book takes no account of social conditions – Ford declares that my introduction restricts itself to the opinion: "the history of censorship is the history of censors". Obviously she has inherited the BBFC's blind spot, because that is not what I wrote. After outlining the importance of various external factors – political agendas, the national psyche and the covert collusion between the film industry and the BBFC – I then state that, "The very nature of film censorship in this country has dictated that a history of censorship is also a history of its censors." (my italics)

Having restricted me to a "narrow model" of her own choosing, Ford then uses the review to make a policy announcement that the BBFC's new remit is to "encourage an exchange of information between the BBFC and video consumers". Does this mean that the BBFC will now tell the public exactly what scenes or shots are cut from films? And even more importantly, why those cuts have been made?

I would be more likely to believe that this information was forthcoming had I not been subject myself to the BBFC's censorship. When I was researching the last chapters of my book, James Ferman refused me access to any BBFC archives dated after 1975 – the year in which Ferman himself was appointed head of the BBFC. Instead I was to be granted unlimited access to the office of the head censor. So from that year onwards the only information I officially received came from the mouth of Ferman or from a limited circle of approved colleagues, such as his deputy, Margaret Ford. In an attempt to ensure that there was no leakage of delicate information, the head censor also decreed that I was not permitted to talk to any of the BBFC's examiners – supposedly because of the board's need for "confidentiality within recent history". Not wishing to tell a one-sided story, I disobeyed this stricture and – even though they were legally bound by confidentiality clauses within their contracts – many of the examiners were prepared to talk to me. They put their jobs and pensions at risk because they believed that Britain's film censorship should be more accountable in practice – as well as in theory.

Inevitably – although I tried to check all the facts – such a cloak-and-dagger approach can only be detrimental to serious and accurate research. Having been denied access to BBFC papers, I would therefore be grateful if Margaret Ford could be more specific as to the "flurry of errors and omissions" she refers to.

It would have been to the benefit of my book – not to mention to the dissemination

of information about what we are and aren't allowed to see – if I had been presented with an open door and freedom of access to records. Thanks to Ford and her boss, I had no choice but to become what she so charmingly describes as "the man with the peep-show machine".

London SE11

No reply

From Mark Wilson

Margaret Ford of the BBFC has the nerve to write that the BBFC wants to "encourage an exchange of information between the BBFC and video consumers" and "foster grassroots accountability" (S&S September). Many BBFC examiners, she states, long to discuss censorship issues with informed members of the public. Despite these fine words, my experience of writing to the BBFC is that when members of the public do try to "exchange information" with the board in an attempt better to inform themselves, they are ignored and their correspondence not even acknowledged.

I wrote to the BBFC on 8 February this year. Shortly after this I received a postcard promising a full reply. This never materialised, so I wrote again on 1 March and received a further postcard apologising for the delay, and promising once again that a full reply would follow. It is now nearly seven months since the BBFC received my letter and I still have not had my promised reply. I have written reminder letters dated 7 May, 1 June, 22 June, 4 July, 20 July and 12 August 1994. Several times I have included a copy of my original letter, and the last time I enclosed a self-addressed stamped envelope. None of these letters has even been acknowledged.

Exeter, Devon

Margaret Ford replies Mark Wilson is owed an apology. The situation has now been rectified. However, this mistake does not compromise the principle of an exchange of information between the BBFC and video users as outlined in my review.

'Variety' uncompromised

From Peter Bart

A most peculiar item appeared in your 'The Business' section (S&S September) concerning *Variety* which I would appreciate your correcting.

Todd McCarthy was never "suspended" for writing a negative review. Similarly, the suggestion that Brian Lowry was chastised for his review of *True Lies* because of presumed pressure from Fox is ludicrous. In point of fact, in the four-plus years I have been editor of *Variety* and *Daily Variety*, no studio has ever applied 'pressure' over a review. One key reason is that they know it would be to no avail. I am very proud of our critics and have no intention of compromising the integrity of their reviews. On rare occasions, it is true, I have vented my own opinions about various films in my own signed column.

Vice president/editorial director, *Variety*, LA, USA
Editor's note We are happy to accept the correction.

Settling scores

From John Bloomfield

In his comments on Vangelis ('Endnotes', S&S August), Mark Kermode mistakenly

attributes to the Greek composer the score for Roland Joffé's *The Mission*. That wonderful shimmering score was by the enormously prolific and talented Italian, Ennio Morricone, whose scores also include the Leone-Eastwood *A Fistful of Dollars*, Levinson's *Bugsy*, the Zeffirelli-Mel Gibson *Hamlet* and Terrence Malick's *Days of Heaven*.

Iowa, USA

Editor's note Morricone is the subject of this month's 'Endnotes' (page 63).

Woodstock: the music

From Bob Quail

Mark Sinker's review of *Woodstock: The Director's Cut* (S&S September) touchingly evokes those aspects of the film that are... touchingly evocative. But I'm less happy with his comments about the music. Being familiar with Sinker's writings in *The Wire*, I'm aware that his interest in music extends way beyond the confines of rock; so why does he adopt the standard rock critic's procedure of ignoring strictly musical considerations in favour of phenomenological and sociological ones? A jaundiced observer might infer that rock critics avoid real musical analysis because rock, for all its superficial 'rebelliousness', is in terms of the musical structures it uses as convention-bound as the earlier popular music it superseded.

However, *Woodstock* occurred at a time when it seemed (for the most part, falsely) that some rock musicians might genuinely transcend the limitations of the genre, and I wish Sinker had found more to say about that. To compare his judgments on just two of the performers, he accepts the legendary status of Jimi Hendrix unquestioningly while dismissing Jefferson Airplane for reasons that seem to be entirely connected with ideology or fashion. I have to say that I find Hendrix's work frustrating: his command of the timbres available from feedback and other distortion techniques was indeed virtuoso, but often formed mere decoration on melodic lines that were not especially adventurous harmonically or metrically. Furthermore, there was little interaction with his accompanying musicians; they were there primarily to provide a nondescript backdrop to the superstar's pyrotechnics. By contrast, at that stage of their career Jefferson Airplane was one of the most interesting bands active, intermittently capable of fluent, uncontrived vocal and instrumental counterpoint, sometimes improvising in scales other than the omnipresent blues-inflected Dorian mode and achieving a wider range of expression than is usual in rock. Unfortunately, writers on the genre are on the whole deaf to such relative subtleties.

London EC1

The critic's role

From J. A. Limas

John Harkness sees Capra, Sturges, Lang et al as dogmas – fatal! (S&S August) Whatever the Coens may have borrowed, *The Hudsucker Proxy* is not a Capra or Sturges film.

The proof of the writer/critic, to me, is one who need not have recourse to two-thirds of referential explanations. The freshness of your monthly 'Obsession' page and 'Private View' column should be everybody's inspiration.

Paris, France



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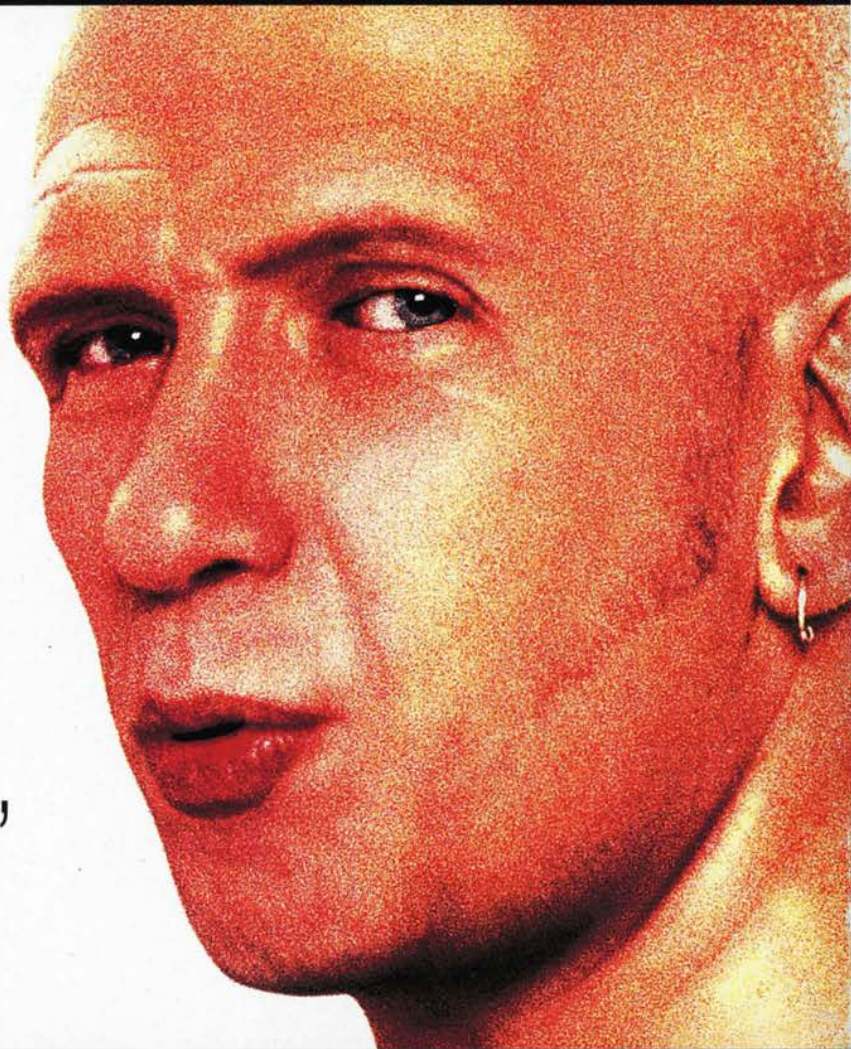
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